

Chapter 1

Privet Drive

A fifteen year old raven haired boy named Harry Potter just arrived in his room at number 4 Privet Drive after his fifth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The entire drive home from King's Cross Train Station was quiet and Harry didn't want it any other way because he was reflecting on what happened during his fifth year. Harry took his trunk and dragged it to the base of his bed and started to unpack.

He only pulled out a few pairs of clothes and some of his text books so he can do his homework. Harry decided to keep things packed as much as possible in his trunk just in case something happened and he had to leave in a hurry. When pulling out his books he saw a wrapped towel and took the towel out. The towel was wrapped around the mirror that Sirius, his godfather, gave him during Christmas last year.

When Harry pulled out the mirror his mind started to race. 'I can't believe that I killed Sirius. Why did I have to be so stupid? I should've just listened to Hermione, now look what happened. All my friends got hurt and almost killed. I need Sirius right now.'

He fell asleep on his bed thinking about Sirius. He woke up around dinner time to the sound of Aunt Petunia yelling for him, "Boy get down here now!" Harry got out of bed and dragged himself down the stairs to the kitchen where everybody was already eating. He noticed that Uncle Vernon was looking at him out of the corner of his eye. After Harry finished eating his dinner, Uncle Vernon told him, "Boy, go and wash the dishes. Just because those freaks at the train station tried to intimidate us, it will not work! Stay out of me and my family's sight or I will kick you out of this house!" Harry was thinking, 'I wish that you would kick me out. I don't care anymore. At least maybe if I die than I'll be with my parents and Sirius again.'

Harry responded, "Yes Uncle Vernon." He got up and took care of the dishes than went to his room and sat at his desk. 'I don't want to deal with this right now. I'm just going to do my homework for now. Maybe

that'll take my mind off of everything.' Harry was working on his homework all night and managed to finish his Charms and Transfiguration homework before going to sleep.

Once his eyes closed he started to dream. He saw Cedric, Sirius, his dad, and his mom standing on a cloud calling out to him. Sirius was saying, "Come on Harry. Forget about all of those people. They don't care about you. But if you die you can join us. It's pretty easy to kill yourself. We're waiting for you."

Harry walked towards them and said, "I'm sorry Sirius. I'm sorry that it was my fault that killed you. I'm sorry for acting so stupid." Once he started to speak, everything just started spilling out of him and all he did was stand there and cry and continuously apologize for what happened.

"Don't worry about it. If you really are sorry, than come and join me. Join me your mom, and your dad. They've been waiting for you for a long time now."

Harry stood there for awhile not sure what to say but all he could think of was he wanted to be with them. Than all of a sudden, the images of everybody on the cloud disappeared and all he heard was his mother's scream and Sirius falling through the Veil at the Department of Mysteries. He woke up startled unsure of how long he slept. He looked at his clock and it was two o'clock in the morning. He was wide awake now and didn't want to try to go back to sleep. All he could think of now was that Sirius wanted him to die so he could join Sirius and his parents.

Harry walked over to the window and saw the quiet street faintly lit by street lights. He put on his shoes and decided to take a walk. While walking towards the park in the neighborhood, he started to think, 'Was that for real? Did Sirius really want me to die? Maybe it was a trick by Voldemort to get me to kill myself. I knew I forgot to practice my occlumency before I went to bed. I need to do something. I have to finish off this fight.'

He heard a pop from behind him spun around quickly with his wand drawn. He looked around to see if he can find who it was. His mind

started to race again, ‘Where are you? I don’t see anything; maybe I’m just paranoid now. Where are you hiding?’ After fifteen minutes of looking around in the park, he gave up searching and sat back down on the swing.

‘What am I going to do? First I lost my parents because of a stupid prophecy. Cedric dies during the fourth year because it was a trap to get my blood to resurrect Voldemort. Only a few days ago, I lose my godfather because of Voldemort again. Damn that bastard.’ Harry started to get angrier with every passing thought. He was angry with himself and angry with Voldemort. ‘I had to be the stupid one and play the hero. Always the hero maybe people were right; I’m a danger to everybody around me. Damn him. I’m going to kill that bastard.’

The air around him filled with energy and was starting to crack. It seemed like the air was slightly glittery. He was looking around himself with the anger building in him and he heard what sounded like three people apparating somewhere behind him. He turned around with his wand drawn again ready to fight with all the anger that was inside of him now. He saw three figures approaching him. Then he heard, “Calm down Harry. It’s me, Remus. I’m here with Tonks, and Mr. Weasley.”

Harry didn’t lower his wand because he didn’t want to believe that it was them so he was trying to think of something to make sure that it was them. He blurted out the first thing that came to his mind and asked, “Who lied to me when I was in the fireplace searching for Sirius?”

A voice from Harry’s left replied, “Kreacher.”

Everybody turned to see who it was that responded. It turned out to be Professor Dumbledore approaching them as Harry lowered his wand. Professor Dumbledore looked tired and troubled. The two stared at each other for a few seconds before Dumbledore spoke with concern in his voice, “Harry, it’s not safe for you to be out here by yourself like this. Please, don’t leave your house like this again.”

Harry replied scathingly, “I’ll do what I want. It’s not my house. It’s the Dursley’s house. If you have such a major problem with that than don’t lock me up with those wretched muggles.”

Professor Dumbledore sighed than continued on, “I know that they are not the best people to stay with but as long as you’re with them than we know that you’re safe.”

“Is that all you wanted to say?”

Dumbledore placed a hand on Harry’s shoulder trying to calm him and said, “No, there’s more that I needed to talk to you about. It concerns your magic and your emotions.”

Still angry, Harry shrugged his shoulders to knock off Dumbledore’s hand and replied, “What about it? If the Ministry of Magic wants to say something than screw them, they can fight this war themselves than.”

“The first is, since trouble has a way of finding you, the Ministry has agreed to allow you to use magic outside of school. I guess this is their way of making up to you about what happened last year.”

“Well, they’re not forgiven.”

“You must not misuse this privilege, Harry. Remember they can take it away also. But on to the second matter, it concerns your emotions. Your powers are growing and you must learn to control them. Just like tonight, if you don’t control your emotions than somebody might be hurt or you risk being exposed.”

“You act like I go around and unleash my anger because I want to. Nobody here knows what I’m going through right now and I would really much appreciate it if you all stayed out of my way.”

Remus stepped towards Harry and tried to calm Harry down. He said, “Harry, we know that you’re angry, sad, and confused right now. Let us try to help you.”

Harry looked at Remus in eye trying to see what's going on in his mind. At this moment Harry realized that he was not the only person that lost someone. Remus lost all of his close friends. At that moment, Harry lost all the anger that was inside of him and filled with sorrow and said, "I'm sorry Professor. I should have realized that you lost someone too. I lost my godfather and you lost your best friend. Actually, you've lost everybody that I considered my family. I'm really sorry. I hope you can forgive me." Tears were starting to build up in his eyes but he was fighting to hold them back.

Remus pulled Harry into a hug and said, "There's nothing to be sorry for. You didn't do anything wrong."

"It was because of me that you lost my parents. It was also because of me that you lost Sirius."

"It wasn't your fault. Remember, everybody made their choice and Sirius wouldn't have wanted to stand by while you were in danger. He died doing what he wanted to do and loved most. He died protecting you Harry and never forget that."

"I shouldn't have fallen for that trap. It was my fault. I should have known better."

"Any of us would have gone to try to rescue Sirius if we thought that he was in trouble. Don't blame yourself for that. It was a mistake that any of us would have committed and now we have to learn to cope with it and move on. That's what Sirius would have wanted us to do. Not sit here and mope."

"I guess."

"Look, it's late now. Why don't we continue this conversation later on. Let's go and get some rest."

The five of them walked back to the Dursley's house. Before he went inside, he turned around and looked at Tonks, Mr. Weasley, Professor Lupin, and Professor Dumbledore and realized that all of them looked very tired. Looking down at his shoes feeling a little

ashamed of himself and said, "I'm sorry for dragging everybody from whatever you were doing."

Mr. Weasley said with concern in his voice, "It's alright Harry. We wanted to make sure that you're fine. Why don't you go in and get some rest?"

"Thank you and good night." Harry turned around and walked inside. He went straight to his room and fell into a dreamless sleep almost immediately.

The next morning, Harry grudgingly woke to the sound of a small owl impatiently pecking at his window. Harry turned around to look at the window and put on his glasses to see what all the noise was about. It was Pig, his best friend Ron's owl.

Harry opened the window and Pig flew around the room in a circle as if it were too hyper to stand still for a second to pull the letter from Pig's foot. After a moment of chasing Pig around the room, Harry managed to grab the owl with his right hand and pulled the letter off with his left hand. It turned out that there were two letters there. The first was from Ron and the second letter was surprisingly from Ginny, Ron's little sister. He released Pig and almost immediately the owl shot out from his window and from what Harry could determine flew home to Ron. He decided to read Ron's letter first.

Harry,

How are you mate? I hope those muggles are treating you properly or else Fred and George said they would pay them a visit. I just wanted to see how you are doing. There's nothing interesting that happened at the Burrow but it's only been one day. We're going to be moving to the place we were last summer tomorrow to be safe but can't say too much about that. I hope you're fine. Write back and let me know how you're doing.

Ron

'I wonder why they're leaving so early. I bet it has to do with something with the Weasleys being in danger because of me. Hmm,'

I'll write him later tonight. I wonder what Ginny wrote.' Harry unrolled Ginny's letter and started to read it.

Harry,

I hope everything is going well with those muggles. We know that you don't want to be there and mum is trying to get you here as soon as possible. You should've seen what happened last night after some of the order went chasing after you. Mum started yelling at Dumbledore for not letting you be with us. Besides, what happened last night? Why were you out all by yourself? You better not be doing anything stupid Harry. Remember what happened to Sirius was not your fault. Don't blame yourself for anything that happened. I can relate to how you feel, remember my first year at Hogwarts. You better write me back soon or I'm going to give you a Bat Boogey Hex.

Love,

Ginny

Harry gave a little laugh because of her threat and though, 'well, Ginny definitely gets to the point doesn't she. Thanks Gin, I needed that. I guess out of everybody, she knows best what's running through my mind right now. After all, she was taken over by Tom during my second year. I'll write her also later tonight. I should get some more homework done and write back tonight before I sleep.'

He spent all day working on his Potions and DADA homework and didn't even leave to go eat because his meals were slipped in a door flap on his bedroom door. During lunch though, he did get a letter from Hermione which was pretty much like Ron's. There wasn't much content other than she was getting ready to head to Grimmauld place soon also. He was pretty proud of himself and knew that Hermione would be surprised that he did his work already and shocked if he finished all his homework before she did. It was getting late so Harry decided to respond to his friends before going to sleep. His first letter was to Ron.

Ron,

I'm fine. How are you though? I wasn't sure if you're over what happened at the Ministry of Magic but I hope you're fine. The Dursleys are fine. They're leaving me alone. I hope your family stays safe.

Harry

P.S. Thanks for helping me at the Ministry of Magic, it really meant a lot to me.

Hermione's letter was next. 'I know I better write a little more or that girl will constantly nag me. Good thing Ron is too thick to push me for anything. She's not going to understand either so I guess I better make the letter appease her.'

Hermione,

How are you? I wanted to thank you for helping me at the Ministry of Magic. I'm sorry for all the problems that I caused for you. I'm dealing with my problems so don't worry. I'll tell you more when I'm ready but until then just please let me try to figure out what's in my head. I don't know when I'll see you but stop worrying. I'm fine. I hope you stay safe.

Harry

'Now, I've got to write to Ginny. She's not going to take that stand by and wait with the excuse that I told Hermione but maybe she'll give me a little bit of time at least. I wonder how she handled it after discovering that she was the person that let the Basilisk loose on the school. I'm such a prat. She's been there to help me and I've ignored her all of these years. She really is a good person, it's time for me to get to know her for her and not as Ron's little sister.'

Ginny,

How are you Gin? I hope you're doing fine. I'm sorry to get you all worried about what happened yesterday. I couldn't sleep and didn't know what to do so I went for a walk. There wasn't any danger so don't worry. I also wanted to thank you for all the help you gave me at

the Ministry of Magic. Honestly, I was surprised that you wrote me. Although, you have always surprised me. You might be surprised at this but you are probably the person that I can relate to the most right now. Don't let anybody know about what I'm telling you though. Hopefully, it could be our little secret, not even Ron or Hermione knows. I'll try to write you soon and hopefully we can get to know each other better.

Harry

Harry finished the letter and sent it off with Hedwig in the middle of the night. Harry watched Hedwig fly into the night and turned to look at his bed and desk. His attention was immediately drawn to the broken mirror that Sirius gave him. Harry started to think, 'maybe I could use that to talk to Ginny. I know I can trust her not to tell anybody about it because I really don't want to talk to anybody right now. I'll have to remember to tell her about it the next time I see her.' With that last thought, Harry got into his bed and cleared his mind to go to sleep.

The third day of summer break started and he didn't have anything to do. Harry decided to spend the day reading one of the many Defense Against the Dark Arts books that everybody seem to give him all the time. He continued to spend the day locked up in his room only leaving to use the loo. His meals were still being slipped through the slit in his door.

While lying in bed at night, he was getting bored and didn't think he could read anymore for the day. There was a pecking at his window and Harry went to let the owl in his room. He didn't recognize the owl but didn't think much of it. He noticed the letter was from Professor Dumbledore.

Harry,

I hope all is well with you. I wanted to inform you that there will be a memorial and a reading of Sirius' will this Friday. Be ready to go at 8 o'clock in the morning.

Albus Dumbledore

Headmaster, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Harry walked over to his window after reading the letter and sat by it staring out into the night. 'It just seems so peaceful out there. I hope there is some chance for Sirius to be alive. How do we know that he is really dead? Yes, Professor Lupin did say that he died but maybe there's something on the other side of the Veil. How does anybody know what's on the other side anyway? Where are you Sirius? I need you here with me. I've got to do something. What to do? I need some help.' He got up and headed over to his desk and pulled out some parchment and ink with his quill and started to write a letter.

Ginny,

As soon as you get this letter don't let anybody know that you have it. Go hide and read the letter. I'm sorry for the secretive nature of this letter but there's really nobody else that I can talk about what's going through my mind right now. Hopefully, you are safe back in hiding. I need you to do me a favor. Go to Sirius' old room and look for a hand held mirror. I'm guessing it's somewhere visible like on his desk or dresser but it might be hidden. When you get it, go some place where you're alone and nobody will overhear you and say "Harry Potter". I'll tell you more later.

Harry

After finishing the letter, he attached the letter to Hedwig and told her, "Here girl, give this to Ginny but don't let anybody know that you're delivering this letter. Thank you Hedwig and off you go." Hedwig took off into the night and Harry went to sleep.

Harry awoke the next morning still plagued by the nightmare he had his first night back on Privet Drive where Sirius was telling him tell kill himself. He was having a hard time sleeping all night and wanted to go take a walk but didn't want the Order chasing after him again and treating him like a little kid that's not supposed to cross the street without an adult. He spent part of the night practicing some of the spells that he had read the previous day. He went to get ready for the day and saw that he looked like hell. When he came back to his room,

he saw the mirror that he repaired from last night sitting on his desk. He grabbed the mirror and sat by the window again looking at the start of a new day.

He heard a voice that said, "Harry Potter."

Harry looked around for awhile than he heard it again. He finally realized that it was a girl's voice coming from the mirror. He grabbed it and looked into it and said, "Ginny Weasley."

Her face appeared in the mirror and Harry said with a hopeful tone, "Ginny?"

She replied, "Yeah Harry, it's me. Are you ok?"

Harry started to think, 'There's really no point to me lying to her. I need help and she's probably the only person that can help me right now.' He ended up saying, "Gin, I'll be honest. I've been better but how have you been?"

Ginny was a bit surprised that Harry was so forward in telling her exactly what he was thinking, she replied, "I've been fine. We're all just worried about you. You know Harry; you shouldn't go walking around town all by yourself especially since You-Know-Who is looking for you."

"Ginny, there wasn't any problem. I just went walking because I needed to get some things through my head. There's so much that I just feel like exploding. Oh are you by yourself?"

"I'm in Sirius' room. Nobody goes in here unless they have to. What is it that you didn't want anybody to know?"

"It's just I don't feel like I can talk to anybody except for you. I just feel that I can talk to you better than anybody else. Hermione is going to keep on pushing me until I break and it's just going to shoot all out and she's going to get mad because I'm not controlling myself. Ron is just too thick to help me very much. Both of them are great friends and all but I really feel like they won't understand."

“Why me though?”

“I know that I haven’t paid much attention to you for the last few years. I saw more of you and learned more about you over the last few weeks. To tell you the truth, you amaze me. You’re incredibly smart and funny. You’re also very quick on your feet when it comes to getting something done, great at quidditch and grow even more beautiful with every passing day.” Harry stopped abruptly and started thinking, ‘Wow where did that come from? I start telling all her good quality and that came out. But I guess that it was true though.’

Ginny was surprised when he said that she started to think, ‘Where did that come from? I never thought that he noticed me but now he says all of those things. I wonder if he really means it though. I can’t be thinking like this. I’m supposed to be over him.’ She ended up saying after that train of thought, “Harry, I’m really glad that you feel that you can come to speak to me. Believe it or not, I’m really happy at the fact that you’re actually able to talk to me and excited that I actually know something about you that Ron and Hermione don’t know. Don’t worry. I’m not going to say anything.”

“Thanks, Gin. I know that I can trust you.”

“So Harry, what is it that you wanted to talk about?”

“Honestly, I want to learn how to handle everything that is going on right now. I know it’s stupid but I don’t even know if I’ll be able to talk about it. At least, I don’t know if I can talk about it yet. I hope you understand.”

“I do. Don’t worry Harry. Just take your time. I’m just really glad that you’re trying to recover. If this was last year, I think you would have closed yourself up in a shell and never let anybody in or at least, not let anybody in until you’ve blown up on them.”

“I’m sorry about that to. You all didn’t deserve that and me blowing up on everybody did not help the situation. If anything all it did was make it worse.”

"It's alright Harry. Speaking of you recovering or trying to heal right now, did you get any sleep? You look really worn like you haven't been able to rest lately."

"I've had my good nights and my bad nights. It just happened that my bad night was last night. I keep on having this dream where, my mum, dad, Cedric, and Sirius are all standing on this cloud with me and Sirius is telling me that everybody is waiting for him and that I should speed up the process and just kill myself to make things easier."

Sounding very nervous and shocked, "Harry, you know the Sirius loves you right? He wouldn't want you to kill yourself."

With a hint of doubt Harry said, "I know. It just seems so real. With every passing night, I don't know how long I will be able to stop believing it until it takes me over. You know, you can only hear something so many times before it slowly gets into your mind and you can't shake it at all."

Picking up on the doubt in Harry's voice, Ginny confidently said, "Harry, I know all too well what it's like to fall to persuasion. Remember my first year at Hogwarts?" With a little shudder, "Tom slowly managed to convince me that what I was doing wasn't anything wrong before I didn't know what I was doing anymore."

"I'm sorry that I wasn't there for you after it all happened. I really should have paid more attention to what you were going through."

"It's alright Harry. That was a long time ago. I have my lapses once in a while. You know, I never told anybody about that either. It was hard to live with myself during the summer after my first year and the start of my second year but I managed to cope with it and you will learn to handle it also. I'll be here to help you so you have nothing to worry about."

Snorting slightly, Harry said with a smile, "You know Miss Weasley, it would appear that you are very confident with yourself."

Sounding very confident, Ginny replied, "Well, I have lots of experience with dealing with stuff I don't want to. You forget that I have five older brothers."

Hesitantly, Harry replied, "You have six older brothers."

"No I didn't. I don't consider Percy to be a brother until he apologizes to everybody for being a prat. You know, you have more reason to be mad than most of us."

"I know, it's just I'll deal with him when he comes around. I'm not going to go searching for him. We'll just see how that goes when we see each other."

"Fair enough, but, mum is calling for me. I've got to go. Harry, whenever you need me just call me. I'll have the mirror with me at all times."

"Alright Ginny, the same goes for you also. If you ever need to talk, I'll be here for you also. You better hurry though before your mum figures out what is going on between you and me."

"I'll talk to you later."

"Nite Gin."

Harry spent the rest of his time practicing more spells that he had learned and went to sleep feeling slightly better about how everything was going.

The two of them spent the rest of the week talking to each other about any subject that they can think of that they felt they could talk about. Harry was slowly able to open up with every passing conversation that they had. There are still a few major things that he still couldn't talk about like the prophecy and Sirius' death.

Chapter 2

Sirius' Will

Harry found it hard to sleep Thursday night because he knew that when he woke up than it would be time to go listen to Sirius' Will. He wanted to go for a walk and talk to somebody again but it was too late and he didn't want to bother Ginny although he didn't think that Ginny would be sleeping yet. He decided to let it go and just lie in his bed.

Harry woke at seven in the morning and decided to get ready. He didn't have a nightmare that night. Instead, he just found it hard to sleep because he would eventually have to face that Sirius was no longer with him anymore.

He was ready to leave by 7:30 and walked down to the kitchen to grab something quick to eat that he wouldn't have to clean. He put some toast in the toaster and waited a minute for it to be done to take it back to his room to eat. On his way back to his room, Harry ran into his Uncle Vernon getting up to get ready to go to work and his Aunt Petunia heading down to get breakfast ready for the family. He tried to keep to himself and walk to his room in silence when his Uncle said angrily, "Boy, don't you dare ignore us. You're just lucky that we allow you to stay in this house."

Harry replied, "Yes sir."

"Why are you dressed as if you're getting ready to go anywhere? You know that you can't leave this house you freak!"

"Somebody will be by soon to pick me up to take me somewhere. Don't worry, you have nothing to worry about. I'll be home by dinner time."

"You make sure those freaks don't attract attention. God knows that everyone of you freaks should be dead so the world can be normal again."

Harry stood there successfully suppressing his anger at his uncle for insulting his friends and for being happy over the fact that his

godfather was dead. Vernon didn't know about his godfather so Harry decided to continue to keep it a secret, after all there's nothing that the Dursleys can do about it anyway. Harry didn't say another word after looking at his Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia for a few seconds and went into his room.

He was looking out the window of his room when he heard the doorbell ring. He heard Uncle Vernon say, "Harry, your friends are here." At this moment, Harry knew for sure that Uncle Vernon was nervous when around wizards and witches. He headed down stairs dressed in his Hogwarts uniform, considering those were the best robes that he had that still fit him. He had grown every year and the only set of robes that fit him well was his Gryffindor robes.

When he reached the bottom of the stairs, Harry saw that Professor Lupin was waiting for him with Tonks. The two of them were standing in the living room with Tonks glancing back once in awhile to the TV that was already running early in the morning.

Harry was grinning at the site of those two and said, "How are you two doing today?"

Tonks turned around and said, "Wotcher Harry, how is everything?"

"Everything is fine. How about you Professor?"

Lupin smiling at Harry said, "I'm fine. I have a week before the next full moon so everything is good so far. Just as long as you don't take anymore late night walks around town."

In a serious tone, Harry said, "It's not my fault that I saw some Deatheaters walking down the street last night. After all, somebody had to stop them."

Tonks sounding surprised said, "I didn't see anything last night. Harry why didn't you tell somebody? You shouldn't be outside at night. You know better than to do that."

Harry laughing said, "I'm just kidding Tonks. Just felt like getting the two of you worked up that's all."

Tonks threw a sofa pillow at Harry which Harry caught without flinching and swung it at Professor Lupin who didn't move out of the way quickly enough. Lupin placed the pillow back on the sofa because of the looks that he was getting from Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia for playing in their immaculate home.

Professor Lupin said, "Harry, I'm not your professor anymore. Please call me either Remus, Lupin, or Moony."

Harry replied, "Alright, Pro...Remus. That'll get some used to."

"Well, we should be going."

"How are we getting there, Remus?"

"We'll be taking a portkey that Professor Dumbledore had setup for us. It activates in ten seconds so come on."

Remus pulled out a ball point pen while Tonks and Harry walked over to place a finger on the pen. The portkey activated and Harry felt the familiar tug of his navel. After recovering from the portkey, Harry realized that they were standing in the portkey area next to the Leaky Cauldron. The three of them headed into the Leaky Cauldron and proceeded through the back and entered Diagon Alley.

Diagon Alley still seemed pretty busy as always but it seemed like everybody was moving in smaller groups. Even though there were laughter and kids running around with out a care in the world, the expression on some of the older wizards and witch's faces were a bit more reserved and filled with concern. It just wasn't the same type of happy and carefree environment that he remembered during his first time to Diagon Alley with Hagrid.

After seeing all of the faces of concern, Harry was taken back to reality why he was there in the first place. All of the happiness that he experienced that morning with Tonks and Remus disappeared and the two of them seemed to recognize the mood change that Harry went through almost instantly.

Harry was flanked on both sides by Remus and Tonks like Harry was their only child and they were afraid that he would run and cause some trouble. Remus than broke the silence by saying, "Harry are you alright?"

Harry was still looking around at the slight change and said, "I'm fine. I guess it didn't really hit me until just now the reason why we are here today."

With concern in his voice, Remus said, "You know we're here for you whenever you need us. If you need to talk or do something, well do something that is safe that is, we're here to do all we can. We miss him also Harry. You don't have to mourn alone."

Also with concern in his voice, Tonks said, "Yeah Harry. We're here if you need us and if you try to joke around by saying that you were chasing Death eaters again than I'm going to hex you before Remus can save you." She had a more playful tone towards the end of what she said.

Harry looked at the two of them and said, "Thanks guys. It really does mean a lot but I'm not quite ready to talk about it yet. If you need to talk than I'm here for you two also. Besides, the two of you seemed like you needed to loosen up a bit; there was so much tension this morning. Don't worry Tonks. I'm not going to tease you like that again." There was a slight pause than Harry said while trying to hold back a grin, "Tonks, can I call you by your first name?"

With a serious tone Tonks turned to him and stopped him, "Harry, if you call me by my first name than I will chase you down and when I'm done with you, you will be wondering what your first name will be."

Harry stared at her for a while and said, "Alright Tonks, you should know that Lupin says your first name all the time."

Lupin turned around with a mock horror expression and said, "Harry, you try to frame me like that again and I'll help Tonks chase you down."

The three of them needed that little tension breaker and continued to head towards Gringott's Wizarding Bank. When they reached the bank, Tonks led Harry off to the side by a wall and stood guard over him while Remus headed over to a desk and talked to a goblin behind the desk.

Remus motioned them over towards a door that Remus and the goblin was heading towards on the right side of the bank that seemed to host a series of doors. The goblin showed them through the door and said, "Just walk through the next set of doors and have a seat. The reading will start in a few minutes once the last remaining parties have arrived."

The three of them entered what appeared to be an observation room. The room was fairly small with a few chairs around a rectangular table. One of the walls of the room was made of glass. Harry stood still for awhile watching all the people that were waiting in the next room.

Harry saw that the entire Weasley family was there along with Hermione Granger and her parents with Professor Dumbledore, Professor McGonagall, Mad-Eye Moody, Kingsley Shacklebolt, and a few other people that he did not recognize. It was at that moment that Harry realized that he forgot something. He asked aloud to nobody in particular, "I thought there was a memorial for Sirius prior to the reading of the will."

Remus answered him while also staring into the same room that Harry was looking at, "There was a change of plans at the last minute due to security concerns. There will be a small gathering later on at headquarters instead of where it was originally planned because we got word that there was a high probability that there was going to be an ambush during the ceremony."

"I see. Why didn't we use the memorial as an excuse to set up a trap for the ambush?"

"We can't really use that as a trap because there would be too many innocent people around along with the fact that we don't know how big of a force that Voldemort will send."

"I don't know if I'm ready for this. If I hear Sirius' will, than he really is gone."

"I know what you mean. We can wait in here for a while longer until the Wizarding attorney shows up to execute the reading."

"How do we know he is really gone? I mean, how do we know what's beyond the veil?"

Remus turned Harry to face him and pulled out two chairs and sat down facing each other with Tonks standing behind Harry. Remus said, "I know that you want to believe that there is a way for him to be alive but there isn't. Nobody returns after crossing the veil. Even if only part of the body falls across the veil than that part of the body is lost forever."

Tonks crouched down behind Harry and wrapped her arms around Harry and whispered in his ear, "It'll be alright."

Harry sighed and was almost immediately interrupted by the door to the main lobby of the bank opening up again. This time a wizard that Harry did not recognize walked into the room. The wizard turned around and said, "I'm Andrew Slate. I'm Mr. Black's attorney. Are you all ready to join everybody else for the reading of the Will?"

Harry blinked a few times sighed, then reluctantly said, "Yes sir."

At that moment Mr. Slate recognized Harry by his scar and stared at him for a few seconds and said, "Please follow me into the next room and we can proceed."

As they opened the door into the room where everybody else was gathered, everybody in the room stopped talking or doing whatever they were doing and looked at who was coming in the room. The room had small chairs lined in rows with a center aisle that was in the middle of the room which led to a small table with a chair at the front of the room. Mr. Slate proceeded to walk to the front of the room and sat behind the table and pulled out some documents and placed them in various stacks on the table.

Tonks walked in first than Harry who was followed in by Remus. Hermione, Ginny, Ron, and Mrs. Weasley were getting ready to rush towards Harry but stopped once Tonks raised her hand to tell them not to approach Harry. Harry was thankful to Tonks for doing what she did because he didn't know if could say anything to them face to face yet.

Everybody sat down and didn't say another word. Harry felt bad for not greeting anybody but all the energy that he possessed earlier seemed to vanish once he made it into Gringott's. After a moment of utter silence, Mr. Slate stood up and started to read aloud the will. When Mr. Slate begin to speak, Harry didn't pay much attention because it didn't seem important and just a mere formality.

Shortly afterwards, Harry was brought back to reality when Tonks nudged him on the side to get him to pay attention. Harry started to hear Mr. Slate again at some point prior to Sirius' actual will. Mr. Slate continued to read.

I, Sirius Black, of sound mind and body nullify and void all previous wills that are in my name. The following are my wishes for the distribution of the possessions and holdings of the Noble House of Black.

To Remus Lupin, I leave you 10 million galleons. I know that you don't like charity and this in fact is not charity. You've been my friend for a very long time and managed to do certain things that I was unable to fulfill for a very long time which was watch over Harry. I can never thank you enough for what you've done so far and ask that you continue to watch over him. Take the money and have some fun with it. We all know that you need some new robes so now there's no reason for you to be wearing tattered robes. Have fun my friend and never forget that.

To Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, I leave you each 10 million galleons. You've been great friends to Harry and he's always said that with out the two of you than he would've been lost a long time ago. Continue to take care of him and watch out for each other. Ron, never forget that laughter is a great form of medicine. Hermione, keep

Harry out of trouble especially since we know that he always gets tangled up in some.

To the Weasley Family, I leave you 30 million galleons. I'm not sure you realize it or not but Harry has always seen you like his family. The amount of love and care that you've given him over the years can not be matched by all the galleons in Gringott's. I thank you all for taking care of him.

To Nymphadora Tonks, my lovely cousin, I leave you 5 million galleons. I hope that you find happiness and manage to trap a certain wolf that we all know you have a thing for. Don't worry, he's too thick to realize anything but never let him go. You should go ahead and make the first move and don't let him use excuses to get out of anything.

There were snickering in the room when Mr. Slate read the part about Tonks.

To Albus Dumbledore, I leave you 50 million galleons. Thirty million galleons is for a group of over aged protectors that I think you know what I mean, ten million is for the school and ten million is for you. I know we have not always agreed on various subjects but I also owe you a great debt of gratitude for protecting Harry all these years. I still believe that he should be told much more than what he is told now and I think you know why.

To Ginerva Weasley, I leave you 5 million galleons. I think most of us know of how you are taken by a certain individual. Continue to live your life but just like Tonks, you might have to make the first move. After all, I haven't had the chance to give him the talk yet. Don't ever give up on your dreams.

Ginny blushed as a few people in the room turned to look at her. Harry was wondering who this person could be since Ginny was obviously over him.

To Harry Potter, my godson, I am so sorry that things are turning out the way that they are. I hope that I went down fighting for the light and especially protecting you over all else. Most of your friends along with

myself are probably safe in assuming that you are blaming yourself for what happened but don't. This just shows one of your greatest qualities as an individual and as a wizard, which is your heart. Always follow your heart but let your mind guide you. I know you probably don't want or need anything but I want to just make sure so, I will be leaving you everything else that has not been distributed yet. This should be about 500 million galleons along with Grimmauld Place along with the business investments in the muggle world which should be about 200 million pounds which is in addition to all the money in the various muggle banks.

There is something else that I intended to give you upon your seventeenth birthday but I guess I won't be able to. So, I will give it to you now. The instructions are in a letter that will be given to you once the reading of this Will is complete. In summary with the combining of both the Potter and Black family vaults and fortunes, you are one of the richest person in the world both muggle and wizarding.

There is one more thing that I wanted done. Harry, I'm pretty sure right now there are many people gathered in the room that would be more than willing to watch out for you and take care of you. I want to make sure that you're being taken care of by somebody that has the means and opportunity to do so. I've already talked to two of these people and would like you to make a decision. It's not an easy decision for that I apologize to you but I believe that what ever decision you make that it will be fine with everybody involved. I want you to choose your new guardian.

After hearing choose your new guardian, Harry felt like the wind was knocked out of him.

I would have chosen for you but I don't believe that I know as much about your relationship and history with these people as much as you do. I've asked Arthur and Molly to be your guardian and I've asked Remus. It's up to you who will be your guardian but I hope you choose one soon for they know what responsibilities that requires of them. Choose well Harry.

I guess this is where the Will is going to end. But remember these last words, "Whenever you need me, I'm going to be in your heart. Never give up and always try to have fun."

There was complete silence when the reading was completed. Harry had a tear going down his cheek but his mind started to race. 'Who am I going to choose? I love the Weasleys but I want to be with Remus also.' He wasn't sure of what he was going to choose.

Remus turned to Harry and said, "Harry, what ever you choose would be fine but I want you to know that both the Weasleys and myself consider it just an honor that Sirius considered us to be your guardian."

Mr. Weasley startled Harry when he placed his hand on Harry's shoulder and said, "Remus is right Harry. No matter what happens you are still part of this family."

Mrs. Weasley continued on by saying, "Harry, it is important that you make this decision soon just in case something happens." She pulled Harry up and gave him a bone crushing hug. That was when he realized that Mrs. Weasley had been crying during the reading of the Will.

After Mrs. Weasley let Harry go, he stood back and looked at the three people. Than after a moment, Harry said, "This is probably one of the hardest decisions that I've ever had to make so far. I'm sorry but I know no matter what everybody says, somebody is going to get hurt by my decision. I want you all to know that I would love to stay with either of you but I can't. I guess I'll choose..." There was a slight pause while Harry took a deep breath and lifted his head up to look at everybody again. "I will be honored, if Remus will be my guardian. I'm sorry Mr. and Mrs. Weasley. It just feels right to be with the last Marauder."

Mr. Weasley said, "Don't feel sorry. I'll be honest with you, I am a little disappointed that you did not choose us but there are no hard feelings. I know that this was not an easy decision and I will reiterate

that we still believe you to be a Weasley just like we see Hermione like one of our daughters also.”

Harry replied, “Thank you sir. You have no idea how much that means to me. Your family was the first to accept me as me and not the Boy-Who-Lived. It is from you and your family that I’ve learned much about compassion.”

Remus said, “Are you sure about this Harry? You know that I’ll be unable to watch you at certain times of the month. Plus, you should know that not many people are going to like the fact that a werewolf is the guardian to Harry Potter.”

Harry looked right into Remus’ eyes and said, “Yes, Remus. I’m sure about this. Besides you know that I can take care of myself. The days while you’re gone, I’ll be able to go play. Anyways, since when have I cared about what other people think about me? Of course, with the exception of those that are close to me.”

Remus pulled Harry into a hug and said, “Your parents and Sirius are proud of you Harry. Don’t ever forget that. You’ve given more of your heart than most wizards and witches would give. If you dare try to take advantage of the situation when I’m not around, I will lock you up and take away your wand until I return.”

There were light laughter around the room when Remus was talking than Mr. Slate interrupted everybody with a cough and said, “If everybody listed in Sirius Black’s Will can come up here and sign your name so the Will can be executed.”

Everybody stepped forward and signed the Will by tapping their wand on the document. Harry was last to tap the document. Once he had finished tapping the document, Mr. Slate said, “Mr. Potter, here is the letter that Mr. Black left for you.”

After taking the letter, Harry said in a calm and confident voice, “Mr. Slate, I was wondering if I can retain your services.”

“I would be honored to work for you Mr. Potter. I must inform you that my services are not cheap.”

“I understand sir. Please call me Harry.”

“What is it that you would like for me to do?”

“I want to set up a few accounts for various purposes. The first thing is, I would like to set aside 30 million galleons for scholarships to pay for students who are accepted into Hogwarts but they don’t have the means to attend the school and those families that can afford to send the child or children to school but will strain the family finances. The second thing is, I would like to set aside 50 million galleons to setup various orphanages around Britain but centered in Hogsmeade. The different orphanages will care for wizarding and muggle children. I want everybody in charge of running the various orphanages to be caring and loving people. The third account will have 20 million galleons set aside for an education program across the wizarding world. The program will help to educate wizards and witches about various misconceptions about what is right and wrong and help to eliminate prejudices with these misconceptions like issues concerning half giants, giants, werewolves, and any other issues that I can’t think of right now. All of these accounts will be in the name of the Marauders. I would like to remain quiet about all of the management of these accounts but reserve the right to step in and make an executive decision if I feel that it is necessary. That same power will lay with Remus Lupin, Ron Weasley, Ginny Weasley, Hermione Granger, and Albus Dumbledore. Of course that is pending that they would like to participate in these projects.”

“I will take care of all of those for you. They should probably all be done by the end of next week. It is a very noble thing that you are doing. You’ve inspired me also and I would like to do this for you for free. Is that all that you needed?”

“For now, until I can think of anything else. If there are any problems please let me know.”

“Thank you sir and good day.”

“Good day.”

Mr. Slate left the room. When Harry turned around after Mr. Slate left the room, he saw a room full of surprised faces. Professor Dumbledore stepped forward and with a twinkle in his eye said, "That was a great thing you just did Harry. I guess that I should know by now that you are full of surprises. I would be honored to work in this project with you but I must go. I'll talk to you again soon, Harry."

"Thank you professor."

Hermione walked over to Harry and pulled him into a hug, "Harry, it's so good to see you. I hope that you're doing better."

"It's good to see you too Hermione. How have you been?"

"I've been good; it was a great thing that you just did. I know that many people will benefit from it for many years. You do know that you did set aside just about enough funds to pay for every student to go to Hogwarts for the next 300 years."

"What's the point of having money if you can't help others with it?"

Ron gave him a pat on the back as Hermione pulled away. He said with a grin, "It really was a good thing. Me and Hermione will be glad to help you with this project."

Ginny ran up next and interrupted her brother by hugging Harry so tight that he could barely breathe. Harry leaned his head down closer to her ears and whispered, "Thank you Gin."

Ginny whispered back to him, "Your welcome. I'm always here for you and never forget that."

Harry smiled, as everybody was watching the two of them saying something to each other but couldn't hear. Remus and Tonks were working hard to hide the grins on their faces. Harry and Ginny reluctantly pulled away from each other and Ginny asked, "Harry are you going to read the letter that Sirius left for you?"

Harry realized that he forgot all about the letter that he just received and pulled the letter out from his pocket. He went to sit down behind the desk so nobody could read the letter.

Harry,

If you're reading this letter, it means that I've died. I'm sorry for leaving you again and hope with all my heart right now that I died protecting you. If that did happen, don't blame yourself for it because it was not your fault and I did what I wanted to do with all my heart and soul. Please continue to live on and try to find happiness. Always remember the good times and don't forget to laugh once in awhile. A good prank is always hard to come by.

There's another reason why I'm writing this letter to you. I was going to give you a few things that rightfully belong to you that are currently in the Potter Family Vault. It's not the vault that your parents set aside for you but this vault contains the family fortune both in money, heirlooms, and priceless things. I've been to the vault once and set aside a few things I believe that you need but didn't want to give it to you until you were seventeen, this was because Dumbledore wanted you to develop more before you received it. If I'm gone than I think that times are getting really bad and you need these things as soon as possible.

The box that I'm talking about is a glossy, rose wood, fire polished box that is sitting on a pedestal immediately in front of you once you walk into the vault. Only a Potter and their guardian may enter the vault but I think that you shouldn't let people know about the contents in this vault until you know what's inside first. Inside the vault there is a small book next to the box that I mentioned earlier that lists the contents of the vault along with a description of the items listed and a small picture of it. The first page is blank because it will magically list the item and a description of the object that you're thinking about. The book will automatically update itself on the contents of the vault. Use the items well Harry and remember, I've never left your heart.

With all my heart and soul,

Sirius

A small tear escaped Harry's face as he read the letter as everybody watched him in silence wondering what it was that Sirius was talking about. Harry looked up and saw the concern on everybody's faces. He stood up wiped the tears from his face and said, "Thank you everybody for coming. If anybody here needs anything please let me know. After all, everybody knows that I have enough money to take care of most things that can be bought."

Professor McGonagall said, "Harry, we're more proud of you than I think you know. Your heart is pure and good. We don't care about your money. We just wanted to make sure that you're fine."

Harry nodded and said, "Thank you professor. There is something that I must do quickly. Will everybody please excuse me?"

Remus said, "What is it that you need to do? You know that we can't let you going off on your own."

Harry replied, "Don't worry; it has to do with the Potter Family Vault. I'll be only a few minutes but I need to do this first."

"I'm coming with you Harry. I'm your guardian now and you're not going to get rid of me that easily."

Hermione, Ron, and Ginny spoke up, "Yeah, we're coming with you."

Harry sighed and knew that he wouldn't be able to get rid of them so he said, "You all can join me when we get to the vault but I need to do something in the vault by myself. Please understand that."

Everybody reluctantly agreed. All the extra order members decided to leave and patrol Diagon Alley until Harry returned to make sure his trip home is safe. The Weasleys, Grangers, Remus, and Tonks joined Harry on the trip to the vault.

Harry asked everybody while they were in the rail cart taking them to the Potter Vault, "How has everybody's summer been going?"

Hermione answered, "It's been going really good. I've managed to get most of my homework done and should be done by the end of next week. I'm trying to get Ron to do his also but he hasn't started yet. Honestly, I would give almost anything if the two of you would take your studies much more seriously after all if you're done early than you have the rest of the summer to have fun."

Harry said with a snicker, "Hermione, you're not going to like that you said that."

Ron said, "Yeah Hermione, don't worry I'll get it done soon. Besides I'll get mine done as soon as Harry does."

Harry said, "You're not going to like what you said either."

Ginny sensing something really good is about to happen asked, "Harry, what are you talking about?"

Harry said, "Well, Hermione now has to do whatever it is that I want and Ron has to do his homework as soon as he gets home and continue to do so because I'm already done."

Hermione and Ron were surprised and Ron's mouth was hanging open. Ginny trying to get the two in trouble said, "So Harry, what are you going to make them do?"

Harry replied with a wicked grin, "I'll think of something." He winked at Ginny and Hermione began to shrink down in her seat.

Ron sounding very relieved said, "Good thing all I have to do is my homework and not have to wait for what ever Harry is thinking of."

Harry said, "Don't think you're off the hook yet, Ron. I can make Hermione do something horrible to you if you keep saying things like that. After all you do know that Hermione is the smartest witch in our year."

Ron began to shrink down in his seat as everybody laughed with the exception of Hermione's parents because they weren't sure what was going on. Hermione's dad trying to come to his daughter's aid said,

"Harry, I hope that you're not going to do anything dishonorable or bad."

Harry sounding very confident said, "Don't worry sir. It will just be just to teach the two of them a lesson."

Hermione's parents seemed satisfied with that answer because they knew from Hermione's stories that he was an upstanding person. Before they knew it, they arrived at the Potter Vault and everyone stepped onto the platform in front of the Vault.

The goblin said, "State your name and if you are permitted into the Vault than you will be able to step through the vault entrance."

Harry stood in front of the vault door and said in a strong affirmative voice, "Harry James Potter." He raised his hand seeing if he can go through the wall and slowly walked past the vault entrance.

The vault was at least five times larger than his personal vault. It had a mountain of Galleons on the right side of the vault and on the left side there were shelves and rows of various things on its shelves from paintings to jewelry to clothes to mountains of books, and to furniture. There were so many different things on the shelves that he couldn't believe that a room could hold all of these things. Along the center row of the vault were two rows of pedestals facing each other. The pedestals either had something sitting on top or floating above it. There were weapons and small boxes. Straight ahead of the entrance on the back wall was a large banner with the Potter Family Crest. Underneath the banner was the pedestal with the box that Sirius talked about in his letter to Harry.

Harry walked forward and headed straight for the box. He opened the box and saw that the box was sectioned. Each section of the box contained something small. Harry took the small book to the right of the box and opened it to the first page. He looked at the first and second section which had a wand inside of it that was inside of a wand holster with the Potter Crest on it. Harry looked over at the book and the first page showed the picture of two wands and two wand holsters. The description of the wands said, these are 12" fire polished rose wood brother wands with the entwined core with a

string from the heart of a phoenix, a griffin, and a Chinese fireball dragon. The wands individually double the strength and accuracy of the caster but when combined makes the casting five times more effective along with additional abilities that only develop with the casters ability. The holsters magically bind to the person and can deliver the wands to the casters hand in less than a hundredth of a second. These four items can not be stolen or taken without the approval of the owner.

Harry took the wand and its holsters out and attached both pairs to the inside of his left and right hand. He looked at the compartment next to it which contained a gold and red necklace of a phoenix with its wings open looking like it was screaming. The description of the wands disappeared and the description and picture of the necklace appeared. The description said that this necklace was forged by Godric Gryffindor and Rowena Ravenclaw. This necklace blocks all minor hexes and jinxes and reduces the effects of all other spells. It also allows the person to read at a rate of five times their current speed while also increasing the person's ability to understand something at five times the rate that they currently are able to learn new material. This necklace cannot be stolen or taken without the owner's approval.

Harry wore the necklace around his neck, tucked the necklace inside his clothes, and looked over to the next section. It contained a pair of stylish silver colored glasses. The description in the book said that the frames of the glass are made of platinum. The lenses were made by Rowena Ravenclaw and Helga Hufflepuff. These lenses are specialized lenses that are light weight and damage proof. The lenses automatically adjusts to accommodates the necessary prescription level with the added benefit of seeing through objects, spotting those hidden by invisibility cloaks, those charmed to be hidden from sight, the ability to see in the night as if it was day time, telescoping ability of seeing twice the distance of normal human eyes, and to protect the eyes from bright lights.

Harry took off his glasses and put on the new glasses and immediately was able to see much better. It was than that Harry remembered that he hasn't been to the eye doctor for years and his prescription was out of date. He looked into the next section which

contained a pin with the Potter Crest and a pin with the Gryffindor Crest. The description for the pin was that the pin with the Potter Family Crest allowed a person to portkey anywhere they wanted to go. It is also the only permanent portkey that allows a person to get to Potter Mansion. In order to portkey to Potter Mansion than the wearer says, "Home to the Phoenix." In order to portkey anywhere else than the person needs to just think of wanting to be there similar to apparating without draining the user's magic reserves. This pin also has a sister pin. The sister pin is the Gryffindor pin. These two pins can portkey the person wearing them to each other's location at any time if they need to find them. All the wearer has to think of is getting to the other person. The Gryffindor pin can only portkey the person to the Potter pin and back to where they last left from. These pins also can not be stolen or taken without the owner's approval. Harry was thinking, 'This could be very interesting. I wonder who I'm going to give the Gryffindor pin.'

Harry clipped the Potter pin into his right wand holster then clipped the Gryffindor pin to his left wand holster and looked into the last section of the box. In the last section there was a red ring that had the Hogwarts Coat of Arms etched into the ring. The book said that this ring when worn becomes hidden. The ring increases the wearer's level senses, perception, agility, and reflexes. This ring was forged by the four founders of Hogwarts. This ring also can not be stolen or taken without the owner's approval. Harry wore the ring and it instantly disappeared. Almost immediately, Harry became aware of the environment he was in. He heard a little whisper coming from the vault entrance of everybody waiting for him. Harry closed the box and placed the book back next to the box and turned to leave the vault. Harry made a mental note to come back to see what else was in the vault.

Harry walked out of the vault and everybody turned to see him coming through the vault door. He looked around grinning because he was thinking of all the new toys that he had now. Harry asked everybody, "Let's go. Do you think we can go shopping?"

Remus said, "I'm sorry but we have to get going."

"Is there a reason why we are leaving so quickly?"

“It’s just the longer you’re away from your Aunt and out in the open than the more danger you’re in.”

“Alright, but can we get something to eat first?”

“Sure, we can go to the Leaky Cauldron.” Remus turned to face everybody and asked, “Would you all like to join us at the Leaky Cauldron for lunch?”

Everyone agreed to lunch and headed down Diagon Alley to the Leaky Cauldron. When walking down Diagon Alley, Harry saw Fred and George’s joke shop, Weasley Wizarding Wheezes. He asked the twins, “How’s business going, Forge and Gred?”

George said, “It’s going great. We’re making so much money that we don’t really know what to do with it.”

Fred said, “You should definitely stop by. After all you have as much interest in the business as you do.”

Harry thought about what Fred just said and he was wondering if Mrs. Weasley knew about him giving his Tri-wizard Tournament winnings. As if his mind was being read, Mrs. Weasley said, “Don’t worry Harry. I ended up forcing them to tell me how they got the money to start their shop but as long as they’re happy than I’ll be happy for them.”

Harry said, “I’m sorry for hiding it from you Mrs. Weasley but I figured they were already going to be having enough trouble facing you about dropping out of school.”

Remus interrupted by saying, “Plus, he doesn’t want to face the Weasley temper. Not to mention I think that Harry is more fearful of the temper of the Weasley women.”

Everybody laughed and continued their way to the Leaky Cauldron. On their way to the Leaky Cauldron, Harry noticed there were still many Order members that were walking around patrolling and pulled closer towards the group as they made their way to go eat.

About two thirds the way through their walk, there were loud screams heard. Everybody turned around and saw Dementors floating towards the center of Diagon Alley. Most of the Order members took off to chase after the Dementors. Harry made to run to help but was tackled after taking two steps.

Somebody pulled Harry back on to his feet and when Harry looked to see who knocked him down it was Remus. Remus said, "No Harry. We have to get you and the others out of here."

Harry sounding very excited said, "We can't leave them. We have to help them!" Harry was struggling to go but was now being held back by Tonks and Mr. Weasley. While struggling, Harry saw that Charlie and Bill were leading and shielding the rest of them in a dead end alley between two stores. Tonks and Mr. Weasley were dragging Harry until he willingly followed. Tonks and Mr. Weasley were on Harry's left and right side while Remus was covering their backs.

When they made it into the alley, Harry pulled out his original wand from his pocket and yelled, "Expecto Patronum." A silvery stag erupted from his wand. Harry said, "Just in case they need some help." Harry turned to the stag and said, "Go and help them get rid of those Dementors."

The stag ran out of the alley and turned down Diagon Alley toward the fight. Ron, Hermione, and Ginny were guarding Hermione's parents while Tonks, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Fred, George, Bill, and Charlie watched the sides of the alley just in case an attack can come from any direction. Remus stood in front of Harry with is left hand shielding Harry from running into the fight.

After about fifteen minutes of fighting, Professor Dumbledore showed up in the alley where they were hiding. He was followed by Fawkes who was flying in circles around Professor Dumbledore as if he were guarding the Headmaster.

He pulled out a piece of parchment and said, "I want all the Weasleys and the Grangers to place a finger on this piece of parchment. It will take you back to Headquarters where it will be safe."

Ginny asked, "What about Harry?"

With a twinkle in his eye the Headmaster looked at Ginny and said, "You don't have to worry Ms. Weasley. Fawkes will be taking Harry back to his room." He turned to look at Remus and Tonks and said, "I'm going to need the two of you to assist me here if possible."

Remus said, "Shouldn't we make sure that Harry is safe. After all the entire Order is here and nobody will be able to guard him."

Harry said, "It will be alright Remus. With an attack going on right now, I don't think that they will try another attack so soon."

Remus nodded and said, "Don't leave that house for anything Harry. If anything happens than send Hedwig out."

Everybody didn't seem too happy with the idea of Harry not having somebody to guard him except for Harry. Fawkes lowered himself to Harry and he grabbed onto Fawkes' tail feathers and was the first person to leave Diagon Alley.

Iamrecognized: Thanks for the review, it's just I like longer chapters but I'll consider shortening it into smaller chapters for later chapters.

Chapter 3

Attack at Privet Drive

Harry reappeared in the middle of his bedroom. After thanking Fawkes for the trip and patting his feathers, Fawkes took off in a ball of flames to join Professor Dumbledore. Harry was sitting by his window thinking, ‘I wonder why they attacked Diagon Alley in the middle of the day? Maybe it was a diversion. This is the first moment in a very long time that there is nobody to stand guard.’

Harry got up and walked over to his desk. He decided to write a letter just in case something happened because if something was to happen than there wouldn’t be time to write a letter. A moment later he heard his name being called.

Harry picked up the mirror and said, “Ginny Weasley.”

Ginny’s face appeared in the mirror. She blushed and seemed excited. Ginny said, “Harry, are you fine? You left so quickly that nobody had a chance to see you off.”

Harry finally realized what had happened and said, “I’m sorry about that. I guess I got the feeling that they wanted me out of there so I just left.”

“It’s alright. I’m just glad that you’re safe.”

“How’s everybody though? Are the Granger’s fine?”

“Oh everybody is fine. Pretty much my entire family is here along with Hermione’s family except for Bill and Charlie who went back to Diagon Alley to see if they can help out.”

“That’s good that everybody’s safe. Are Hermione’s parents going to freak out about this?”

“They seem to be handling it well. It turned out that Hermione has been easing them into what has been happening in the wizarding world over the last few weeks. Her parents wanted to take her out of

Hogwarts but she managed to convince them that she would be in bigger danger if she was taken out of school.”

“That’s good. I don’t know if Ron and me could survive a year without her pushing us to finish our work.”

“How are you though?”

Ginny blushed, and said, “I’m fine Harry. I’m just glad that I now have a way to keep tabs on you Mr. Potter.”

Sarcastically, Harry said, “I should’ve known better than to have told you about the mirror.”

“It’s too late now Harry. I get you all to myself.”

Harry blushed and said, “Now, Miss Weasley, I don’t think that Dean would like it very much if you ignored him for me.”

With a light chuckle she said, “I never went out with Dean. I just did that to get to Ron. You know how he gets with any boy that shows any interest in me.”

“You know, I don’t think that Ron will ever give any guy a chance with you. I’m just surprised he didn’t leave the Burrow once you got home and chased down Dean.”

“He wanted to do that but I managed to calm him down. Ron isn’t hard with every guy with me though.”

“Well, name one guy that your brother wouldn’t mind you go out with.”

Ginny was hesitant to say anything. She blushed again and looked around her room. Than Harry said, “Come on Gin. You can tell me. This guy must treat you pretty well if he wouldn’t mind you dating him.”

“Well, it’s...it’s you Harry.”

Harry was confused for a second which Ginny picked up on. He than said, "I thought that he knew that you were over me."

"In all honesty Harry, I never got over my crush on you. I know that you only see me as Ron's little sister."

"Ginny..."

"It's alright Harry. I can live with that. I'm really glad that you see me as a friend and became included in the things you do. You should know that there are many at school that envies the friendship that you, Ron, and Hermione have."

"Ginny..."

"I want you to be happy and if this makes you happy than I'm glad." There was a pause and than Ginny looked back at the mirror and said, "Hermione's at the door. She wants to get in. I'll talk to you later."

"Alright Ginny, but keep the mirror activated and I'll sit here in silence. I promise."

"Ok, if it gets too personal or Hermione says something confidential than I'm going to close the connection between the mirrors until tonight. If anything does happen, I'll talk to you when Hermione leaves."

"Alright..."

Ginny held the mirror close to her and made sure that Hermione didn't see the front of the mirror. She walked over to the door and unlocked it. Hermione walked into the room and sat on her bed while Ginny sat across from her on her own bed.

Hermione asked, "Why did you lock the door?"

Ginny said, "I just felt like being by myself."

Hermione didn't believe her, she said, "I heard you talking to somebody. Who were you talking to?"

"I wasn't talking to anybody Hermione."

"Well, if you're not going to tell me than fine. But I wanted to ask you something though."

"What is it?"

"Is there something going on between you and Harry? It's just that the two of you seemed pretty close after the reading of Sirius' Will. I meant when you hugged him. I don't think that most of the people noticed anything except for Tonks, Remus, and me."

"There's nothing going on between us. He just wrote me the same letters that he wrote you and Ron."

"What do you mean letters? He only wrote me one letter."

"Well, I just asked him a few things, that's all. He just answered some of my questions."

"Ginny, I know that you keep on telling me that you're over him but we all know that you're not. Besides, I think that he might have a thing for you now..."

While Hermione was talking, Harry saw that Ginny's face began to get red again in embarrassment. He didn't get a chance to listen to the end of the conversation because Ginny ended the connection between the two mirrors.

Harry found the conversation pretty interesting and decided to just wait until later in the night when Ginny calls him through the mirror again. Harry packed everything that he didn't need just in case something happen. He shrunk his trunk and placed it into his pocket.

Harry went down stairs to the kitchen to search for something to eat. He ran into his Aunt who was in the kitchen. His Aunt asked, "What do you want now?"

While holding back trying to sound mean, Harry said, "I wanted to find something to eat. I didn't get anything to eat yet. It has been a busy day."

Aunt Petunia took an apple and shoved it at Harry and said, "Now you have something to eat. Now go back to your room and stay there."

Harry took the apple and headed back to his room. He ate the apple while looking out at the street. He sat staring for a long time and ended up falling asleep. He was awoken some time later by the sound of someone calling him. Harry pulled out the mirror and called out for Ginny again.

Ginny said, "Harry, I'm sorry about that but Hermione finally left when Ron asked for some help on his homework."

Harry said, "I wonder when the two of them will realize that they were meant to be together."

"I think that they already know that but they don't want to admit to it yet. The two of them are very stubborn. Not to mention, Hermione probably wants him to make the first move and Ron is too scared to make the first move."

"You're probably right. I think we might have to do something about that."

"Harry did you get anything to eat yet? It took me a little longer to get back to you because in the middle of talking to Hermione, mum called us down to eat."

"Aunt Petunia gave me an apple to eat. It should be able to hold me over for awhile before I have to sneak down and grab something when the rest of them are asleep. At least they're ignoring me and everybody is minding their own business."

Just than Harry heard someone yell, "Reducto!" There was an explosion downstairs. Harry said, "Hold on Ginny, I'll be right back."

Before Ginny could say anything he had opened the door and walked over to the top of the staircase.

Harry saw that there was a deatheater that just walked through where the front door used to be. Harry ran back to his room. He took the letter that he wrote earlier and attached it to Hedwig's leg. He told Hedwig, "Get to Remus as quickly as possible. As a matter of fact get to Grimmauld Place and give this letter to anybody who is there. Off you go girl and don't come back here. I'll come to get you if necessary."

Hedwig took off into the night and was flying as fast as she could. Harry picked up the mirror and said, "Ginny, there are death eaters that are attacking. I have to go!"

Ginny yelled, "Harry get out of there! Don't try to fight them!"

Harry said, "Remember, don't let anybody know about the mirror. I'll contact you when it's all over. I've got to go." At that moment, there were several loud screams coming from downstairs. Harry tapped the mirror with his wand and the connection ended.

Harry instantly shrunk the mirror and slid it into the same pocket as his trunk. He slipped his original wand the holly wand into his pocket and with a flick of his wrist his right hand now had one of the new rose wands. He ran to the staircase and from the top of the staircase spotted his first deatheater. Harry yelled, "Stupefy!" The spell hit the deatheater and he fell over. Harry made his way downstairs and saw that the Dursleys were all gathered into a corner.

Three death eaters turned to see their comrade fall. They turned their wand at Harry and yelled different spells at him. One of the death eaters yelled, "Remember, don't kill him. That's for the Dark Lord." Harry managed to block the first spell and dodge the second spell but wasn't lucky with the third spell. The third spell was a cutting hex that sliced across his lower left leg. Blood was coming out of the wound and he screamed in pain as the spell hit him.

Once he stopped screaming, Harry yelled, "Reducto!" in the middle of the three death eaters. Two of them managed to dodge the spell but

the third was close enough to the impact that part of the wood that blew apart from the wall shot into his chest and he fell over and died.

Harry limped over to the Dursleys and stood in front of them. He yelled at them, “I’m going to try to get you over to your car. Once you get into it. Hurry and leave!” The Dursleys couldn’t think of anything except to listen to what he was saying. Five more deatheaters showed up and Harry continued to shout, “Protego!” over and over again until he was able to get the Dursleys to the car. As they backed away from the house a spell hit the back of the car and blew up the trunk of the car but they continued to drive off.

After the Dursleys were safely away, Harry made his way back to the house to continue to fight. He managed to stun another deatheater but was immediately hit by two more spells that opened a wound across his chest and one across his back. Harry’s blood was shot all over the front lawn as Order members were apparating near the house. Harry shot three more reducto spells at the front of the house where the deatheaters were at but only managed to take out one more deatheater. The spells were so powerful that half of the front of the house and lawn was either blown up or had craters in it.

A reducto spell hit the ground to Harry’s right and blew him into the air and across the lawn. The Order members were still running towards the house when they saw Harry’s body thrown into the air. Once he landed in the middle of a rose bush, Harry whispered, “Home to the Phoenix”, when he saw the deatheaters make their way to him and he disappeared.

Just prior to Harry’s disappearance, there were about ten Order members that had apparated about three houses across the street from the Dursleys. Among those that came to help were Tonks, Remus, Bill, Charlie, Mr. Weasley, and Moody. They watched in horror as they ran down the street shooting spells when they saw Harry standing on the front lawn with his clothes soaked in blood and barely able to stand. After they saw the red spell hit near Harry and saw him fly into the sky and land without getting up, all of them feared the worse. They made it to the house across from the Dursleys as some of the deatheaters engaged them for battle and other deatheaters made their way over to where Harry had landed.

The Order members defeated those deatheaters easily and all the remaining deatheaters apparated away including those that were surrounded to where Harry had landed. Some Order members that were led by Moody, Bill, and Charlie made their way into the house to make sure that it was secure while the rest went searching for Harry.

A moment later, Aurors showed up to run damage control but it didn't take long for word to get out that Harry was missing. The Order members that were not Aurors left and headed back to Grimmauld Place. All of the Order members were worn and worried about Harry's fate. When they arrived back, headquarters was in a state of chaos. Some of the people were talking about Harry had died while others said he was captured. It didn't take long for Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Fred, and George to hear the commotion from Ron's room where all of them were gathered waiting for news on what happened to Harry.

They raced downstairs into the kitchen to see Remus, Bill, Charlie, and Mr. Weasley looking very grim and Mrs. Weasley crying. Hermione asked aloud to nobody in particular, "What happened? Is Harry hurt? Where is he now?"

The entire room went quiet as Mrs. Weasley stood up and said, "Now children, it's late now. All of you go up to bed. Let us take care of what happened to Harry."

Nobody left as Ron said, "We can't do anything until we know that Harry is safe." At that moment the Grangers showed up in a state of confusion just like all the kids. They asked, "What is going on here?"

Mr. Weasley placed a hand on his wife's shoulder and said, "Molly, the kids have a right to know. They are his friends and they wouldn't be able to think of anything until they know the truth."

Mrs. Weasley was going to say something but held it back as Mr. Weasley pulled her down to sit with him. Remus stood up and said, "Now everybody sit down and we'll tell you what we know about what happened tonight."

Everybody took a seat in the room and a few adults stood along the walls because there wasn't enough room and they wanted to have the kids sitting when they hear the news. Remus looked at all the kids with a grim face and said, "You all know that after Ginny said that there was a problem at Harry's home we were first a bit skeptical but gathered the Order just in case she was right."

All of the eyes in the room were on Remus. He paused, took a deep breath, and continued, "It took us about fifteen minutes to get about ten people to go help Harry. What some of you don't know is that we sent Charlie ahead shortly after Ginny said there was a problem. He went there and came back immediately to get help. When we got there, we saw that the front of the house was blown to pieces. Pretty much half of the front of the house was destroyed. We also saw Harry standing in the front lawn trying to fight them off. He really couldn't do very much because he was outnumbered by what we think were ten deatheaters. He was standing there with his clothes soaked in blood and barely able to stand."

Ginny and Hermione started to join Mrs. Weasley who was already crying. Hermione's parents went to hug her as Charlie went to take care of his sister. Remus looked at them and continued, "We think that a reducto spell was hit close to Harry and threw him across the lawn onto some bushes. When he landed, that's when we made it to the battle and started to fight. By the time the fight was over, Harry was gone. We didn't see him get up from the bush."

Ron asked, "Is he dead?"

Remus answered quickly after Ron asked the question, "We don't think so. We are waiting for word from Professor Snape to know if Voldemort managed to capture Harry. That's about all that we know right now but I'm not going to lie to you. It doesn't look too good right now because Harry was beaten up pretty good by the time we got there."

The room was in complete silence. They all sat there with some trying to think of something positive, while others were trying to figure out what happened before they got there, some were contemplating on where Harry is currently at, and some just prayed that Harry was safe.

At that moment a snow owl flew into the room that seemed like it had been in a hurry and been flying as fast as it could because it seemed a bit tired for such a short trip. It held out its leg to Remus and he took the letter from the owl. Remus said, "It's from Harry."

At that moment, Tonks, Kingsley, Moody, and Professor Dumbledore showed up. Everybody looked at all the people that just joined them as Tonks said, "What's going on? Why is everybody in here?"

Charlie answered her, "We just got a letter from Harry." He turned to Remus and said, "Go ahead and read it out loud. There's no point in hiding the contents of a letter that everybody knows that Harry sent."

Remus looked over at Professor Dumbledore for approval. The Professor with no twinkle in his eyes and also looking very grim nodded his approval to Remus. He than unrolled the piece of parchment and read, "Attack on Privet Drive. Need help as soon as possible. Harry."

Remus dropped the letter on the kitchen table and everybody just stared at the letter like it was poison. There was complete silence for several minutes thinking of how everything just went wrong in one night. Tonks spoke up and said what almost everybody was thinking, especially the adults, "We failed him. He called for help and we couldn't help him. Now all we can do is sit and wait."

A few people nodded while Professor Dumbledore spoke up, "Don't blame yourselves for this. We were caught off guard and there's nothing we can do about it now. Don't give up hope. Remember, Harry has always been able to surprise and amaze us with everything he's done and gone through so far. Never give up hope."

Everybody seemed to agree with everything the Headmaster said with the exception that it wasn't their fault. This was the first time that Harry was left without a guard since the end of his fourth year and this happens. Things were starting to break up when the fireplace roared with green flames. The person that came through was Professor Snape.

Professor Dumbledore asked, "Is there any news of Harry and how they got through the wards, Severus?"

Snape also looking very tired said, "The Dark Lord did not capture Potter. It turned out that Potter managed to disappear before they could capture him."

There were several sighs as the tension in the room lessened slightly. For everybody in the room, hope had returned to everyone's heart that Harry was alive. They still feared for him because he is injured and unprotected but after everything so far, people seemed content at the moment that he is not with Voldemort.

Snape noticing the tension in the room dying a bit continued on by saying, "It turned out that the Dark Lord had several curse breakers trying to break through the wards for some time now. It was actual luck that they managed to break the wards. They used some of the Dark Lord's blood which contained some of Potter's blood as the final key in breaking the wards. They have been going from house to house to see if they had picked the right house. The attack on Diagon Alley was merely coincidental and not a diversion. I did not know about the attack on Diagon Alley until it was too late. It turned out that the Diagon Alley attack was planned by some other deatheater that I don't know of yet."

It was at that moment that Ginny remembered about the mirror. She shot up and ran up to her room with tears in her eyes. Hermione made to follow her but Charlie said, "Just give her some time alone. She'll be fine. Just give her a moment." Hermione sat back down while several different people.

Ginny locked the door to the room and pulled out the mirror that she was carrying. She kept on calling out, "Harry Potter," over and over again. There wasn't any response. She was afraid that he might be too injured to use the mirror or might be dead. Ginny hoped that he left so fast that he forgot about the mirror.

After about an hour of lying in bed, there was a knock on the door. Ginny hid the mirror and opened the door. It was Hermione and Ron. They came in and asked if Ginny was fine. Ginny stared at them for a

few moments than looked from Ron's eyes to Hermione's eyes. She signed and said, "I'm fine. I'm just thinking that's all."

Ron said, "Don't worry Ginny. Harry is too stubborn to go down this easily. He's been up against worse and survived so he'll be back again."

Ginny gave a hint of a smile because she knew that Ron was right. Than she said, "I'm just really tired now. I just want to go to bed."

Hermione said, "Alright Ginny. Why don't you go to bed and I'll be back in a few moments."

The two of them looked at each other for a moment as Ron was standing at the door waiting for Hermione. After the two of them left, Ginny slipped into her sleep clothes and laid in bed thinking about what Harry had gone through year after year. She fell asleep thinking of how Harry will come back and when he does she's not going to let him go anywhere.

Tanydwr: Thanks for the review. The Potter family is ancient. That was what I was trying to imply with the references back to the founders of Hogwarts when it came to Harry's new "toys." I'll try to be clearer in the story.

Chapter 4

Potter Mansion

Harry woke up the next morning not really remembering what happened just after he flew in the air. He sat up very confused wondering how it was that he got into bed. The room he was in was a large bedroom. It had a large bed sitting in the middle of the room with a dresser and mirror on the opposite side of a door that sat between two floor to ceiling windows. On the two adjacent walls, there were two doors facing each other and several art works along the walls. The room was decorated in midnight blue and white.

He got out of bed and opened the middle door which led out into a hallway. Harry followed the hallway to the staircase and proceeded down the stairs. He arrived in the middle of a large sitting room that was decorated in Gryffindor colors. There were three large sofas facing a fireplace. Above the fireplace was a banner with the Potter Family Crest upon it.

He continued to explore the house until he stumbled into the kitchen. Harry could smell the aroma of breakfast being prepared and started to feel hungry. He walked in and saw two house elves in the kitchen preparing breakfast. Harry said, "Uh... Hi."

The two house elves turned around to look at Harry. They rushed over to him. The two house elves were dressed in clean and nice looking clothing that fit them well. The one of the right was dressed in a red and white outfit while the one of the left dressed in a blue and white outfit. The one in red said, "Young master, you're awake. It's good to see you're up and about."

Harry still confused said, "Hi, why are you calling me master? Where am I?"

The house elf dressed in blue said, "We're really sorry. It's been so long since you've been here. You're at Potter Mansion. It's the ancestral home of the Potter Family. You are now the last remaining Potter and the master of the house."

"What do you mean I haven't been here for a long time?"

The house elf in red said, "You must not remember that. Shortly after you were born, the young master and your parents stayed here for about a week before you went into hiding."

"Where is this place and I'm sorry but who are the two of you?"

The house elf in blue said, "I'm Rain and this is my brother Ray. My family has been serving the Ancient and Noble House of Potter for hundreds of years. Your family is a good family and we are honored to serve the Potters."

"Where are we?"

"The Potter Mansion is located on the edge of Hogsmeade."

"Does anybody live here? Have the two of you been taking care of the house all this time?"

"Nobody else lives here. We've been waiting for you to come back. It's great that the young master has returned home. We've been taking care of the mansion since a few years before you were born. Nobody else lives here."

Harry stood there in silence thinking about the word 'home.' Then he looked at the two house elves and said, "Please don't call me master. I'm Harry. Just call me Harry. I don't care much for being anybody's master. I prefer being friends with you rather than being your master."

The two house elves nodded and said, "We're honored that you would consider us to be friends." They looked at each other and said, "Harry," as if they were trying to say it.

Harry seemed satisfied with that and said, "I would be happy if you continue to work here but I must insist that you all be treated as equals and if you need anything please come and let me know."

The two house elves smiled and jumped up and down. They ran over to Harry and hugged him and Rain said, "We'd be honored to have you as a friend."

The three of them pulled away and Ray said, "You should sit and have breakfast. We can get caught up over breakfast."

Harry nodded and the two house elves rushed over to the stove to get the eggs, sausages, bacon, and toast that they had prepared. The three of them sat down and ate while they continued their conversation.

Harry asked, "Are there any other house elves that work here?"

Rain said, "There are no other house elves that live or work here. We're the only two left. There used to be up to six house elves here but they died with old age."

Harry nodded, took bite from his toast and asked, "How did you know about me being who I am? How did you know that I was not an intruder?"

Ray said, "We were shocked when we saw you, Harry. Only a Potter can enter this house plus this house is under several charms and protection that makes it safer than Hogwarts itself."

"Than how do guests enter this house? Does anybody other than Potters enter this house?"

"Guests can enter and leave the house when they are either escorted in either by a Potter or one of the house elves. The house elves can only escort somebody in that has been approved by a Potter. There are other ways for them to enter later on after being escorted in the first time but they will have to be permitted to do so by a simple charm performed by the head of the Potter family, in this case it is you."

"Oh, who were some of the recent guests into this house?"

"The last few visitors that visited the house were some of your parent's friends from school. They can not enter the house again without you permitting them in because your father did not have the time to perform the charm for them to enter on their own."

"I see. Please tell me about the house."

Rain said, "The Potter Mansion sits on a property of approximately fifty acres of land. Thirty acres of the land is actually a forest with a small creek running through it. The main complex which is this house is three floors along with a basement. The main floor has a large library along with two sitting rooms, a music room, three guest bedrooms, along with the house elves living quarter, an exercise room, a thirty person dinning room, along with a training arena. The second floor has a large sitting area with a balcony along with four suites. Each suite has a common sitting room which is joined by six bedrooms. The third floor is usually reserved only for the Potter family. It has a large sitting area which is joined by the master bedroom and four bedrooms. The third floor also has a library dedicated to the Potter Family history and extremely rare books that the family kept aside so it wouldn't be destroyed, tampered with, or housed some of the Potter Family spells developed over the years. Every bedroom has their own private bathroom and the bedrooms change to accommodate the occupant."

Harry asked, "What's in the basement?"

"The basement houses a holding chamber for prisoners. If an intruder manages to sneak into the house by hiding in something that somebody brought in like a wizard with an animagus form of a bug manages to sneak into the house through a shopping bag than they will be instantly sent to the holding chamber."

"Is that like a torture chamber?"

"No, this is only a holding area for observation and interrogation."

"Is there anything else in the basement?"

"Yes, it houses the potions lab and infirmary that automatically refills on anything that it is not stocked full of. The potions lab is equipped to the equivalence of five Hogwarts potions stock. There is also a sitting room down there but it is the least comfortable sitting room out of the entire house."

"You mentioned that this is the main complex. What other building is there?"

"There is the barn that offers shelter to all the animals that live on the property. It is just behind the house and you can usually see animals running around the property. I'm sure they will also be happy to know that you've returned also. All the animals help to protect the borders of the property from other animals intruding on the property. Plus much of the animals are magical."

"I know that I arrived pretty beaten up, how is it that I'm healed now?"

Rain said, "When we saw you, you were barely conscious. We took you down to the infirmary and took care of all your wounds and gave you a blood replenishing potion. You seemed to heal fairly quickly."

"Oh, well, thank you."

The two house elves got up to clean up after dinner. While cleaning up, Harry asked them, "Can you two show me around the house? I really want to see the training area and the barn."

The three of them headed out to the barn first. They walked out of the back door in the main sitting room into the back yard. There was a covered porch that had small circular tables and a hammock for relaxing outdoor. The porch was surrounded by short bushes that were bordered by flowers. The grounds looked absolutely beautiful with the forest forming a box around the open area of the property. The barn was directly behind the house and was two stories tall. The walls went up about fifteen feet and then there were poles shooting up about five feet from there that supported the upside down 'V' style roof. The poles allowed for the birds to fly in and out and air to flow freely throughout the barn. The barn had two sets of twelve foot tall French style doors that were about teen feet wide to allow lots of

room for entry and exiting. The barn was colored in a dark green and white which made it flow in with the surrounding greenery.

When they walked into the barn all the animals in there seemed to stop what they were doing and looked at Harry as he walked in with the two house elves. The middle of the barn looked like what could be an area to hold a large bonfire. It had what looked like wood wrapped around itself and it was so large that it didn't seem like it would have problem keeping the barn warm during the winter even with all the open areas of the barn. The barn seemed to mimic a forest. There was a large grassy area for just grazing and several trees that had nests in them for the birds to stay in. There is a large two level fountain with the top level for the birds to drink from and the bottom level for all the land animals to drink from.

Next to the fountain about thirty feet away was a large area for feeding. There were many different types of food there from bird seeds, to shrubs, and meat for the carnivores. Everything that the animals needed could be found inside of the barn. The barn looked absolutely massive from the inside. The inside of the barn looked like it was about five acres of land.

The animals slowly approached Harry as he looked around all the animals that were gathered there. Harry asked, "How many animals are there that stay here?"

Rain said, "There are many different types of animals here but you should know that a few of them are pets of the Potter Family."

Ray continued on by saying, "There are several breeds of horses, wolves, dogs, cats, hawks, eagles, ravens, deer, tigers, and panthers. They are not your pets but they do live on the land and protect the borders of the property. In fact, most of them don't mind being looked as pets but they like their sense of freedom but if you ever need or want them, they will come to you."

Rain said, "The pets of the Potter Family in most case are extremely rare. The only reason why they are pets because they have either been in the family for a long time or asked to be a pet and guardian of the family and watch over its members. The pets are the only ones

that leave the property and can be summoned outside of the property.”

Harry was petting the various animals affectionately and all of the animals seemed to pick up on his sincerity. They allowed him to pet them and then ran off and played with each other. Harry turned around and asked, “Who are the pets of the Potter Family?”

Rain held up her hand and yelled, “Summon!”

Three birds flew down to Harry from the four corners of the barn along with a land animal came rushing forward as fast as they could. The land animal that reached Harry jumped up into his arms. It was a baby white tiger.

Rain said, “This white tiger is Blaze. He has two magical abilities. He can change to the size of an adult white tiger and ability to disappear to another place similar to using a portkey with the ability of taking somebody with him.”

Harry stroked it behind its neck and said, “It’s nice to meet you Blaze.” Blaze jumped down from Harry and turned into an adult white tiger that was about four feet tall. Harry jumped back from the shock and walked back up to stroke Blaze.

Blaze rubbed against Harry’s leg affectionately. Harry continued to stroke Blaze while the two of the birds landed on Blaze and the third bird landed on Harry’s left shoulder. They were three phoenixes that were of different color. Harry turned to the three birds and stroked each one of them.

The first phoenix looked like Fawkes with his gold and red feathers. The second phoenix has red feathers with white feather ends. The last phoenix, the one that is on Harry’s shoulder has light blue feathers that looked like the sky along with white feather ends. Ray said, “The gold and red phoenix’s name is Sunrise, the red and white phoenix’s name is Sunset, the blue and white phoenix’s name is Nightlight.”

Harry said, “Hi, Sunrise, Sunset, and Nightlight. How are you?”

Sunrise and Sunset nodded their head and gave a peaceful trill than flew off to their respective nests. Nightlight stayed on Harry's shoulder while Blaze shrank back down and followed Harry around.

Rain said, "Don't worry about Sunrise and Sunset, they like to stay hidden and will show up instantly if they sense you're in danger or if you want them."

Ray said, "Nightlight and Blaze are probably going to follow you around everywhere. Nightlight will probably follow you to Hogwarts and stay out of sight when there but Blaze is more than likely going to follow you everywhere. The two of them are really protective of the Potter family."

Harry said, "I see. Well, let's get back to the house and you can show me the training room."

On their way back to the mansion, Harry saw what looked absolutely beautiful. The house was colored red and gold. He could see part of the front yard of the house from the side of the house and the forest wrapped around the edge of the front yard also. The house stood tall and looked magnificent because of the way the light bounced off the house and the way the windows seemed to sparkle.

They walked into the training room, which had two rooms to it. The first room was similar to the room at the reading of Sirius' Will at Gringott's. The room had several comfortable looking sofas that faced the window facing the training room. There were tables behind the sofas.

Harry proceeded through the next door and looked around the room. It turned out that the window that the other room used to look into this room is a mirror that they couldn't see through. Harry was able to see through the mirror though with the use of his new glasses. The room had several different types of hand held weapons along the wall like swords, staffs, and kendo sticks among other weapons. Harry saw there were several life size dummies that lined the wall.

Rain said, "This room has been charmed to accommodate the fighter's abilities so that they are not completely overwhelmed but don't have such an easy time. The dummies along the wall will be the training partners and the books in the libraries will help teach you new skills. If there is any difficulty, then the dummies can show you how to perform something. This is mainly for hand to hand combat. They can not show you how to perform a spell."

Harry said, "That's good. Oh before I forget. I better get a letter to everybody so they know that I'm fine. They're probably worried out of their mind."

Ray said, "Write your letter and Nightlight will be able to deliver the letter for you. We'll go and prepare lunch."

Harry went back up to his room to write his letter while Ray and Rain disappeared with a snap of their fingers. Harry searched his room and went to the door on the right which led to a private office. There is a large luxurious desk along with several bookcases that line the wall. There was a sofa and two plush chairs that sat facing a wizards chess set. The desk faced the sofa. Harry noticed that all of his stuff was unpacked and a few of his things were used to decorate the office like the picture of his parents dancing was on his desk. Harry sat for a moment before he wrote his letter.

Everybody,

I'm sorry for causing everybody trouble but I wanted to let everyone know that I'm safe. I'm currently hiding in a place that nobody will guess and should be safe for the time being. There are a few things that I must do before I return but don't worry. You won't be able to contact me though so don't worry about me. I hope that everybody is safe and well. Until next time, I hope that everybody stays safe.

Harry

P.S. The mirror

Harry gave the letter to Nightlight and said, "Here girl, take this to 12 Grimmauld Place where the rest of the order is at. It's our headquarters against evil so try not to be seen. Now off you go."

The phoenix flew into the air and disappeared in a ball of flames. Harry went down to the kitchen to join Rain and Ray for lunch with Blaze following Harry around. They sat down with Blaze eating out from a small dish on the ground next to Harry.

Meanwhile back at headquarters, the Weasleys, the Grangers, and Remus were eating lunch in the kitchen when the blue and white phoenix interrupted their meal. Everybody jumped back for awhile with a few wands drawn. Hermione and Ginny had screamed which caused Tonks and Professor Dumbledore to rush into the room.

The phoenix flew over to the nearest person and landed on Ginny's shoulder. Ginny took the letter from the phoenix and it flew into the air. Nightlight took to the air and disappeared before Ginny had time to unroll the letter.

Once she finished reading the letter to everyone, the relief on everybody's face was showing. Everybody was confused about the mirror message except for Ginny. She didn't want to make it obvious that she knew what was going on so she stayed with everybody for the time being and finishing lunch while the discussion about Harry started again.

The conversation went from where could Harry be to is he really safe and to why didn't he want to show up yet. An Order meeting was called and the children were pushed out the door. Ginny decided that it wasn't safe yet to try to get in contact with Harry. She was going to wait until it was night and sneak into Sirius' room to talk to Harry.

Back with Harry, he had a nice lunch talking with Ray and Rain about the last few years. They worked out a schedule how things will be done for the rest of the summer so everybody will be able to get into a rhythm and not disrupt anybody too much.

After lunch, Harry went to muggle London to get some shopping done. He decided to get clothes that actually fit him. Blaze was a bit

disappointed that he wouldn't be able to follow Harry at the moment but seemed to understand that walking around town with a tiger is not very common and could draw too much attention. The two of them appear to be able to communicate to one another even though Harry didn't know how to speak to a tiger.

Clothes shopping started out slow because Harry didn't know what to get and what size clothes he wore. After a few sales ladies managed to get his clothes size and recommend different outfits from sleeping clothes to some dress clothes. In the end after approximately four hours of shopping in muggle London and a quick stop at Gringott's to pick up money for his shopping spree, he ended up buying five sets of sleep clothing, twenty sets of casual clothing, and five sets of dress clothing.

Harry arrived back home and placed his stuff away and explored the house further. By the end of the night, Harry had burned all of Dudley's old clothing and dressed in his new clothing. He looked at himself in the mirror and thought that clothes that actually fit him made a big difference to his appearance. While exploring the mansion with Nightlight and Blaze, Harry heard his name being called.

Harry pulled out the mirror that he shrunk into his pocket and with a tap of his wand, the mirror changed back to its regular size. Harry was in the library at the moment looking through the defense section of the library. He said, "Ginny Weasley," and Ginny's face showed up in the mirror.

Ginny's face lit up and said, "Harry! Are you ok?"

Harry smiled because of the concern that Ginny was giving and said, "I'm great Ginny. Everything started out rocky but it's good now. How are you? How is everything over there?"

"It's been going fine over here. Everybody was worried sick about you that night that you were attacked. The tension died down a bit after we received your letter but there is some skepticism that you are really fine and safe. Remus has been more worried than most and Professor Dumbledore even seemed to have lost the twinkle in his eyes that we seem to be used to."

"I'm really sorry for causing all of the worry."

"I know Harry, but how come you're not returning?"

"I have something real important that I need to do that I think that Sirius would want me to do. It's a secret for now but I will let everybody in on it soon."

"You're not going to tell me either?"

"Not yet, Ms. Weasley, you'll just have to wait and find out with everybody else. If everything turns out the way I think it will than you will be pleasantly surprised."

Ginny conceded that she wouldn't be able to get anything out of him about it. The two of them talked about various things that have been going on. They decided to call it a night when Ginny gave a yawn. Harry told her that he won't be able to talk to her through the mirror anytime soon and that she should call him when the Hogwarts letters and O.W.L. results arrived. Ginny promised to let him know and reluctantly said good bye to each other until the letters arrived.

Harry ended up spending the rest of June working on a few major areas of improving himself to help him defeat Voldemort if they should fight anytime soon. Harry started the morning off with a three hour workout that started at five in the morning with intensive training in Defense Against the Dark Arts, Occlumency and Leglimency, Animagus, Apparating, and Stealth Movements and Fighting. To compliment his everyday schedule, he also included a rotating schedule of Transfiguration, Charms, Herbology, and Potions. By the end of the month, he had mastered Apparating, became very proficient in Stealth Movements and Fighting, and felt like he had mastered Occlumency but needed to be tested in it. He had made lots of progress and becoming an Animagus and Leglimency which he was practicing on people in Hogsmeade that randomly walked by. In all of his other work, he had the equivalent knowledge of seventh year graduates but his Defense work seemed to be moving the quickest due to his physical training in the morning.

In July, Harry decided to drop Occlumency training but used it to practice prior to sleeping and after awhile became second nature to him. Harry decided to replace the Occlumency and Apparating part of his schedule with Healing. He was extremely thankful for the extensive library which showed him how to do things with the assistance of the dummies in the training room. Rain and Ray even managed to help him with things concerning non-magical training. July proved to be a month full of excitement and break through in Harry's training. At mid-month while in the training arena, Harry managed to successfully turn into his animagus form for the first time and see what he was. Harry became a gold and red phoenix. This didn't surprise him very much though because his family is tied so closely with a phoenix. There was only one other recording of a phoenix animagus which was Godric Gryffindor.

Shortly before Harry realized his animagus form, he mastered Leglimency and only needed to truly test it against a master along with his Occlumency which he made a note of to test his abilities when he shows up at headquarters. Harry decided to increase his Healing training in replacement of Leglimency and switched his Animagus training to controlling and enhancing his Animagus abilities. By the end of July, Harry was extremely proficient in his animagus transformations and abilities along with having the ability of a field medic in healing. In Defense Against the Dark Arts, Harry had the abilities equivalent to somebody who just graduated from Auror training. His training in this field now included martial arts, wandless, wordless, and wandless/wordless magic. In the other fields of study, Harry was proficient enough that if needed to, he would have enough experience and knowledge to become a professor at Hogwarts.

At the start of training in August, all of his training became so intense that if somebody wasn't careful than there would've been a major explosion in potions or lost a few limbs in Defense training. By mid-August Harry was extremely fit and proficient in everything that he was doing. With the assistance of the necklace, ring, and glasses which helped him accelerate at such a fast pace that his professors would now have problems keeping up with him. Harry was by no means invincible but he became confident in what he did. This added with him eating properly and exercising gave him an aura that he was not a person to be taken lightly and demanded attention although he

didn't want attention. His thirst for knowledge decided to spread into pleasant reading in philosophy and social theories.

A/N: Here's to all of my reviewers.

Mysticah: I'm glad that I might convert you. I usually only ready H/G and H/Hr stories so maybe it'll be a nice change.

Dancerrdw: I hope that his was quick enough update.

Gopha-gurl: Don't worry; Harry's going to be pulling some tricks later on with the toys.

Hrtbreaker: Sorry, I wasn't intentionally leaving a cliffhanger and didn't realize it until you said so.

Sillypaulie: I'm glad to please you.

Rubber-duckiesofdoom: Hope you liked this chapter just as much.

Lady Jillyan Malfoy-Potter: I'll try to keep you happy.

Bobboky: Thank you, I'll try to keep it up.

Nutty Al: I hope that this chapter answered your questions. Yes, I think Ginny fell for him but will he return it?

Tanydwr: I love crazy reviewers, j/k. Yup, Harry has been taken back to the mansion and don't forget to keep up with the crazy reviews.

A/N: Thanks for the reviews and please keep up it up.

Chapter 5

Grimmauld Place

Harry started out the day with his usual Physical Training which was followed by his session in wandless/wordless Defense. Harry just left the training arena and headed into the kitchen for a snack before he went to go work in the potions lab which was a long session today because it was the last day to the Wolfsbane potion that he wanted to try just in case Remus was to need it one day. While sitting in the kitchen eating his snack, he heard his name being called. It took him a second to realize that it was his mirror because he hadn't used it for so long. Harry pulled the mirror out, enlarged it again, and said, "Ginny Weasley."

Ginny's face appeared in the mirror and seemed excited for some reason, Harry asked, "How are you?"

Ginny blushed just by seeing Harry's face and noticing how he changed and looked more confident and rested. He looked so much better to her, more so than she has ever seen and she hasn't seen the rest of Harry yet. She said, "Hi Harry. I'm fine. The owls just arrived delivering everybody's letters and Hermione is extremely hyper right now." With an annoyed voice she said, "Like it's a surprise that she didn't get all O's in her scores with the exception of astronomy where she received an E."

Harry finding it amusing that Ginny seemed a bit annoyed said, "That's great. I'm really happy for her. Is everybody there?"

Ginny said, "Pretty much. Your letters have been delivered here and Hermione was trying to open your letter but you can thank Ron for protecting your letters. It's on the kitchen table and everybody seems afraid to go near it."

"Why is that?"

"It's just that everybody hoped that you would show up to get your own letters. They don't want to believe that you've disappeared. After all, how are you supposed to know that the letters arrived anyway?"

"I guess, but who is there exactly?"

"Well, my entire family is here and Hermione's family is still here. You know I think it's a good thing to have my dad and Hermione's dad together because they constantly ask each other about each other's world. It turns out that Hermione's dad is just as fascinated with the wizarding world as my dad is about the muggle world. You can definitely tell where Hermione got her thirst from knowledge from. Well, in addition to the two families, Remus is here along with Tonks. I think that Professor Dumbledore and McGonagall are showing up a little later."

"This is going to be interesting. Can you get my letters and read them to me?"

Ginny's faced changed to a hint of anger and said, "Mr. Potter, you can come here and get them yourself. Everybody is waiting to see if you will show up."

Harry smiled and said, "I tell you what Ms. Weasley, just because you look so nice, I will be there to pick up my letter."

Ginny's face lit up and asked, "When are you coming?"

"That will be a surprise." Harry wanted to get ready before going over there because he was all sweaty and smelly from his training in the morning so he said, "I have to go do something but I'll see you soon."

"Do you promise?" She paused for a moment to hear his response but he didn't so she asked again, "Harry, do you promise to show up soon?"

Harry still had a grin on his face said, "I promise that I will show up soon. Don't worry."

"Alright, I'll see you soon than Harry."

With that, Ginny disappeared and Harry went to get ready for his appearance at Grimmauld Place. He took a nice long shower and got

out of the shower feeling refreshed and energized. He wore his two wand holsters again and polished his three wands. He inserted his rose wands in their respective holsters and got dressed. Harry slid his third wand in his right pants pocket. Harry was dressed in some casual clothing that complemented his body very well.

Harry walked back down to the kitchen to let Ray and Rain know what is going on. He told them that he would probably be gone for hours and will be back at night. Blaze and Nightlight were going to accompany him on his trip. Harry walked out to the barn and told the animals there that he would be leaving for a few hours. Sunrise and Sunset flew down as if they were going to follow him but Harry said, "Sunrise and Sunset, I want the two of you to stay here and watch the place. I want to keep some secrets for now."

The two phoenixes went to fly out of the barn as if they were going to go play. The three phoenixes and Harry had been having some fun playing around when Harry changed into his animagus form. Harry walked back to the kitchen and ate lunch joined by Ray, Rain, Nightlight, and Blaze.

After lunch Harry was thinking about what is about to happen. After a moment of contemplation, he decided that it was time. He called Nightlight down to him and Blaze jumped into his arms. With a flash of blue flames Harry appeared in the middle of Sirius' old room. Harry looked around the room and saw that somebody finally decided to clean up the room a little but didn't seem like anybody stayed in the room though. There was still dust on much of the room and a pile of old clothes in the corner of the room. He looked in the dresser and it was all Sirius' clothes and things in the closet.

The room looked so dark and still had the green paint in the room that seemed old and moldy and ready to peel off the wall. Harry pulled out his holly wand and with a few incantations cleaned up the room to make it look like new. The room was now in Gryffindor colors. All of Sirius' things were packed and stored in the closet for Harry to go through them later. Harry than went into the bathroom and with a flick of his wand everything was immaculate again. The room seemed so much easier to stay in now.

With the help of his glasses, Harry scanned through the door of the room and saw that nobody was in the hallway. Harry scanned from room to room and noticed that nobody were in their rooms. It didn't take him long to realize that everybody was either gathered in the kitchen or in the drawing room. There didn't really seem to be a meeting going on and everybody just seemed to be in some kind of conversation. The drawing room door was open and nobody seemed to recognize that Harry was there. The Grangers were sitting there talking with Ron, Ginny, Fred, and George about what to expect in their sixth year as the twins were trying to scare Ginny about the O.W.L.S.

With all the training in stealth movement, Harry managed to slip into the room undetected and crawled around the room so that he was directly behind Ginny. He reached his hands up and covered her eyes and said, "Guess who?"

Ginny jumped up and screamed with all the joy and excitement in her, "Harry!"

The twins fell off of their seats as Ron was choking on a piece of chocolate frog that he was eating. Hermione jumped up and drew her wand pointing it at Harry while her parents were trying to hold back their laughter from everybody's reaction. Ginny turned around and gave him a hug so tight like she was afraid that he was going to disappear again. Hermione lowered her wand and ran over and gave him a hug also.

Ron managed to spit out the piece of chocolate frog that he was eating and said, "Bloody Hell, mate! Where have you been, we've been worried sick. You should've seen Ginny and Hermione."

He walked over and gave Harry a pat on the back. Harry was still hugging Ginny as Hermione broke away. He said, "Nice to see you too Ron."

Harry than continued on by saying, "I'm sorry everybody for my disappearance but it was important. I'll tell you all about it one day. Well, how is everybody though?"

Ginny was in a daze because as she was hugging him, she felt how developed he became over the last few months. She didn't want to let him go and everybody in the room seemed to pick up on that. Harry whispered to her, "Ginny, you're going to have to let me go. I don't know if I can move around with you on me like this but I don't mind."

Ginny became so red that it was hard to hide her excitement as she reluctantly let go of Harry. The twins came up and patted him on the back and Fred said, "It's good to have our investor back."

George said, "I agree, it doesn't look good if the investor disappear and nobody can find him."

Ginny turned to them with her wand drawn and said, "You leave him alone or I'll teach the two of you a lesson."

Everybody laughed at the twins as they slowly walked away. Harry interrupted it by saying, "It's good to see everybody again." He walked over to Mr. and Mrs. Granger and said, "How are you?" while shaking their hands.

Mr. Granger said, "It's good to have you back Harry. It's good to see that you're well and safe."

Harry nodded and turned to Hermione and she said, "Where have you been? Why haven't you written to us?"

Harry raised his hand for her to calm down and said, "Calm down Hermione. I'll tell everybody at the same time. Let's go to the kitchen and surprise them."

As everybody followed Harry out of the room, he got a wicked grin on his face that Ginny picked up on and asked, "What are you thinking?"

Harry said, "I have a nice way to surprise everybody." He called down Blaze who jumped into his hand as everybody tried to get a good look and touch the small white tiger. Harry told everyone, "Blaze is about to change into a full grown white tiger so don't jump or scream because it could ruin the prank."

Everybody nodded and gasped as Blaze turned into a full size white tiger. Harry said, "I want you to go into the kitchen and scare the adults a little for me."

The twins got excited about this prank and were trying to contain their excitement as the tiger made its way into the kitchen. There were several screams and sounds of chairs hitting the ground as Blaze walked into the kitchen. Everybody walked in and Blaze shrunk back down and jumped back into Harry's arms.

All of the kids were laughing at the adults while the adults were trying to recover from the shock of seeing a tiger walk into the kitchen and than seeing Harry standing in front of them. A few seconds later, Mrs. Weasley, Remus, and Tonks ran over to Harry and gave him bone crushing hugs after hugs.

Mrs. Weasley broke the silence by asking, "Where have you been Harry? We've been worried sick. The Order has been trying to find you for months now."

Harry stepped back and said in a calm voice, "I've been hiding out in a secret area. I'm sorry to worry everybody but I had to do this."

Remus asked, "Are you going to tell us where you've been and what you've been doing?"

Harry stood there and thought about it for a moment and said, "I can't tell you where I've been but I have a feeling that you already know or will know Remus. Please don't tell anybody yet. I'm not done yet and need to keep it a secret for now. On the second matter though, I can tell you. I've been training. I've been trying to fine tune everything I've learned so far and increase my ability and knowledge in several other fields."

Remus finally realized where he saw that white tiger before and said, "Blaze."

Harry nodded and said, "I want everybody to meet my friend Blaze. He's my white tiger."

Everybody looked at it for a moment and than tried to pat him. At this moment Nightlight flew into the room and landed on Harry's shoulder. Harry said, "This is my phoenix friend, her name is Nightlight."

Everybody's face in the room was either in awe or confusion at Harry having a pet phoenix and a white tiger except for Remus. Remus said, "If you have been where I think you've been than I want you to take me there."

Ginny, Hermione, Ron, Fred, and George all said, "Yeah, we want to come also."

Harry said, "I tell you what. Everybody can come over Christmas but I can't bring you there yet."

At that moment, Professor Dumbledore, McGonagall, and Snape showed up in the entrance to the kitchen. Harry sensed them approaching but nobody else seemed to notice that they had arrived. He was thankful that the professors showed up when they did. With his back to them, Harry said, "It's nice to see you professors."

Everybody noticed the professors waiting at the door. The Headmaster spoke up first, "It's good to see that you're well and safe Harry."

Harry turned around and saw the twinkle in the Headmaster's eyes and said with a large smile, "It's good to know that you're well and safe also Professor Dumbledore and McGonagall."

Professor McGonagall said, "It would appear that we have some business to discuss."

Harry asked, "What is it that we need to talk about?"

The Headmaster said, "Since you won't give us the details of where you have been and I don't believe that Remus will be giving up that information soon. Why don't we start with what you have been doing?"

Harry was relieved that he was going to be pressed about where he has been but didn't really want to talk about what he had been doing either. He decided to tell them, "Well, everybody better sit down. This could take a while."

Everybody took seats around the kitchen table or conjured chairs to sit. While everybody was getting ready to listen, Harry was looking into the fireplace and placed Blaze onto the floor. He turned around and saw everybody's eyes upon him. Nightlight went to sit on a shelf over the stove anticipating that this could take a while and to keep a look out.

Harry looked at everybody and said, "I'm sure everybody knows what happened at the Dursleys. Well, since that event I went into hiding to train. I've increased my knowledge and skill in five major fields, Defense Against the Dark Arts, Charms, Transfiguration, Occlumency, and Potions."

With a smirk and arrogance Professor Snape said, "With all the help in the world, you will be no good in potions. Besides without somebody to work on the Occlumency against, I don't believe that you have developed at all in that skill either."

Harry turned to Remus and said, "Here Remus. I made this for you. It should help you."

Remus asked him although he had a good feeling he already knew what it was, "What is this Harry?"

Harry smiled and said, "That's Wolfsbane Potion. I hope it helps you."

Hermione jumped up and said, "Harry, how did you make that? Many of the ingredients are hard to find and only a very skilled potions maker can brew it. It exceeds that of NEWT level."

Harry turned to Hermione and said, "The place that I was in already had the ingredients in stock. I've been working on very complex potions for several weeks now. In all honesty, I couldn't test out this potion for obvious reasons. But I am confident that it was brewed correctly."

Remus said, "I'll try it. Thanks Harry."

Harry said, "No problem Remus. Please let me know though, if it worked properly. I made some modifications based on the references that the library held and it should make the transformation much easier than previous potions but it will also not wear you down as much therefore you should only be worn the night of the transformation."

Everybody looked at Harry in surprise and Remus nodded his approval to Harry. Harry turned to look at Professor Snape and said, "You are right Professor that I can not truly test out this ability without an accomplished legilimens to test me. Therefore, would you like to do the honors Professor?"

Professor Snape stood up and said, "I'm not going to be easy on you. I'll come at you with everything that I've got and you better not run and hide because everybody here will know what a fraud you really are."

Harry said with a smirk, "Very well but I will also warn you that if you fail to break into my mind that I will blast your mind and I can't guarantee that you'll be too happy with the results."

Professor Snape looked at him loathingly, went to the front where Harry was standing, raised his wand, and yelled, "Legilimens!"

The next second, Professor Snape was shot across the room and slammed into the wall. Harry looked at him with no concern on his face and said, "I warned you."

Professor Snape stood up with anger in his voice and said, "How dare you Potter attack a teacher? You are just like your pathetic excuse for a father."

Before anybody blinked an eye, Harry was standing directly in front of Professor Snape with his holly wand drawn and said with an eerie calm voice that made everyone scared when he said, "Don't you ever

insult my father again. If you do, I will hunt you down and Voldemort will seem like a boy scout when compared to me.”

There was nothing but dead silence in the room as everybody stared at what was happening in front of them. Professor Dumbledore stood up with the twinkle in his eyes shining brighter than when he arrived said, “That’s enough Severus, and there was no reason for you to insult Harry or his father for he warned you before you attempted to break into his mind.”

Professor Snape lowered his wand and Harry lowered his wand as a result. Harry walked away from Snape and returned to his place in front of the room by the fireplace. He slipped his wand back into his pocket and looked at everybody who was staring at him in awe for the things he managed to do in less than five minutes. Fred, George, and Ron were trying to hold back their laughter due to Snape’s embarrassment.

Harry gave a sigh and said, “I think that proves a few of the things that I’ve been working on.” His eyes scanned the room and saw a few things that made him wonder when it happened. He saw that Tonks and Remus were really close to each other along with Ron and Hermione. Harry decided against saying anything until they wanted to tell him or if they even realized what they were doing. He also saw Ginny staring at him with wonder and admiration.

Professor Dumbledore broke Harry’s concentration when he said, “Harry, I believe that your O.W.L. results have arrived and your Hogwarts letter have arrived also. Why don’t you open them and we can plan on what to do this year?”

Tonks handed him his letters and everybody stared curiously what he got. Harry read the letter revealing no emotion on his face and when he was finished reading his O.W.L. results, he said, “Interesting.”

Hermione looked like she was going to strangle him when he said that. Harry saw this coming and felt like teasing her a little longer. He slipped the letter back into its envelope and put the letter in his pocket. Ron thought that he might have done bad and said, “Come on mate,

it can't be that bad. You must have done better than me and I've got 8 owls where Hermione got the most with 12 owls."

Harry looked at Ron and said, "I did alright. I just did that to tease Hermione. After all look at her, she's ready to strangle me right now for holding out on her for fifteen seconds."

The entire room turned to look at Hermione and she shrunk down in her seat. Half of the people in the room broke down and laughed. Hermione ended up breaking up the laughter by asking, "Are you going to tell us?"

Harry nodded and said, "I got an owl in everything except for Divination and History of Magic. I got an O in Care of Magical Creatures, Transfiguration, Potions, and Defense. Everything else I got an E in it."

Hermione said, "That's great Harry," and ran up and gave him a hug.

Harry gave her a hug in return and handed her his O.W.L. letter. When she was reading the letter with everybody staring at her trying to get a look at the letter, Harry pulled out his Hogwarts letter to read it. It was the standard letter from Hogwarts along with a list of classes that he is eligible to take.

Professor Dumbledore broke up the chatter over Harry's O.W.L. results when he noticed Harry finish reading the letter. The Headmaster asked, "Harry, what classes are you going to take next year so we can schedule your classes."

Harry looked up and said, "I think that I'm going to take Charms, DADA, Potions, Herbology, Care of Magical Creatures, and Healing."

Professor McGonagall looked at him and gave two coughs. Harry looked at her and said, "I was wondering what you were going to say if I didn't take your class, Professor. I was just teasing you also. I would be crazy if I didn't take Transfiguration with one of the most beautiful professors in all of England. I am more than happy to take your class Professor McGonagall."

Professor McGonagall said with a hint of a smile, “Don’t try to flatter me Mr. Potter. That sweet talking did not work with your father and neither with you. What ever happened this summer must have been good because I haven’t seen you so confident and comfortable.”

Harry looked at her and smiled for being compared to his father. Professor Dumbledore asked, “Harry, there are a few other things that I was hoping that I could talk to you about alone.”

Harry nodded and the two of them left the kitchen to head to the drawing room. Everybody else stayed in the room as Mrs. Weasley and Mrs. Granger got up and decided to get dinner started. When the Headmaster and Harry arrived in the next room, they took seats opposite each other and Professor Dumbledore asked, “Would you care for some tea?”

Harry said, “Yes, please.” He waited for Professor Dumbledore to conjure the tea set and poured some tea for the two of them before he asked, “What was it that you wanted to talk to me about?”

The Headmaster said, “I was wondering if you would be starting the DA again this year? If you do than you could make it a club opened to the rest of the school and have a teacher sponsor it just like any other student organizations.”

Harry thought about it for a minute and said, “We really only started it because Umbridge was a complete idiot and we didn’t learn anything. We needed to take things in our own hands in order to protect ourselves. I don’t know yet.”

“Fair enough, Harry. Is there anything that you would like to tell me about what is going on?”

“Well, there really isn’t much to tell. All I can say is expect a year of surprises Professor.”

The Professor smiled because he definitely knew that this year was going to be interesting. He than asked, “Is there anything you wanted to know or needed?”

"To tell you the truth, I've been pretty happy lately not knowing what has been going on. It gave me much time to train and clear my mind to get all of my priorities straight. There is one thing that could help but I understand if you won't be able to assist me with it though."

"What is it that you wanted?"

"I was wondering if you would permit me to have my own room. I've grown accustomed to a very rigorous schedule and today is actually the first day in about eight weeks that the routine is broken. It's just that my own room would make it much easier for me to continue my training."

Professor Dumbledore thought about it for a minute and said, "I think that we can accommodate you for this year because the Head Boy and Head Girl are in Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw respectively. You can take the Head Boy/Head Girl suite in Gryffindor. That way you have your own bedroom along with a training room and a common room to do your school work."

Harry smiled and said, "That would be great. I think that everybody is waiting for us Professor."

The two of them proceeded back into the kitchen where everybody was talking to each other and waiting for dinner to be done. Professor Dumbledore and Harry sat down at the table. The professors sat at one end of the table while Harry sat between Ginny and Remus on the other side of the table. Ron, Hermione, and Tonks sat across from the three of them.

They were talking with each other about trivial subject matters from school to quidditch. Harry slipped his hand under the table and grabbed Ginny's. He squeezed her hand and she began to blush but only a few people noticed but nobody knew why she was blushing. They released their hands when it came time to eat dinner. Dinner was an enjoyable event.

When dinner ended, the professors left to go back to Hogwarts. Shortly after they left, Percy showed up. Harry and Percy were staring at each other. Ginny saw the confusion on Harry's face and

whispered to him, “He came back to the family a few weeks ago. Everybody seemed to have forgiven him except for Ron and me. It’s still pretty uneasy when he’s around but we all just put on an act so mum won’t be hurt.”

Harry whispered, “Thanks Gin.”

Percy walked over towards Harry and said, “How are you Harry?”

Everybody was looking at the two of them when Harry said, “I’m fine.”

“That’s good. I wanted to apologize for insulting you last year.”

“It’s alright. You just have to remember how lucky you are to be in your family. Don’t betray them again and we’ll be fine.”

Percy sounding very offended about being lectured by someone younger than him with an arrogant voice said, “I guess because you were right about You-Know-Who makes you right about everything now.”

Harry stood up staring into Percy’s eyes and said, “I never claim to know everything. It’s not my fault that the idiot of a Minister screwed up because he is a coward and you can’t seem to admit that you were wrong.”

Percy returned the glare said, “The Minister was only doing what he thought was right. Besides, who would want to believe you? You have no credibility among the wizarding world. All you ever do is try to seek attention.”

“Anybody who knows anything about the true me and not some glorified book knows that I hate attention. I have more credibility than that idiot of a Minister who lies and takes bribes from Death eaters.”

“Don’t you ever talk about the Minister like that!”

“I will speak as I please because I know that the idiot isn’t fit to lead a small business not to say the wizards and witches of England.”

Percy's voice slowly started to rise when he said, "If you have a problem with the Minister than you are an idiot. You would do better not to upset him and follow him."

Harry's voice rose at the same rate as Percy when he said, "I will do what is right not to do something because somebody thought I should do it. Unlike some people, I will not compromise my principles for the approval of a public that would easily turn on me based on some unfounded lies."

The two of them continued to stare at each other until Ginny pulled Harry away. Percy took this moment to leave the kitchen and Harry shook his head after he left. Harry sighed and saw that Blaze was ready to jump all of Percy and Nightlight flew across the room waiting for the command to attack.

Harry picked up Blaze and said, "I'm sorry about that just now. Politics and me don't mix very well and I don't think that I will get along with it." He looked around the room at everybody.

Ginny spoke up first by saying, "It's not your fault Harry. Percy can't seem to get pass the point that he was wrong. It'll get better, just give him some time."

Harry nodded and said, "I think it's time for me to go too. I've got a busy day tomorrow and have to prepare for the start of the new school year."

Remus said, "Harry stay. We have so much to catch up on."

Harry reluctantly agreed to stay. He was glad later on that he did because everybody was gathered in the drawing room and talked into the night. Everybody enjoyed exchanging stories with each other and late at night, Harry, Nightlight, and Blaze went home to get some rest before the next day to continue their training.

A/N: Now to my much appreciated reviewers and thank you for your reviews.

Dancerrdw: I hope that you liked this chapter also.

Nutty Al: Intersting concept of Ginny wetting her knickers. I might have to integrate that in later.

Eric: Thank you and this is a H/G fic.

Partxtimeangelita: I hope you liked this chapter also and soon the H/G relationship will develop but won't be rushed so the story flows better.

Bobboky: Thank you

Highbrass: I hope that you liked this chapter also.

Tanydwr: Happy belated birthday my favorite 'crazy' reviewer. I'm glad that you were happy with the chapter. Yes, somebody else is going to train along later on. I didn't know about the summer term thing so thanks for the info.

FRED: This is a H/G story. But your recommendation about Tonks will give an interesting twist. I might be able to work something in.

Bommor: I hope the update was fast enough for you and hope that you liked this chapter just as much.

Chapter 6

Attack on Diagon Alley

Harry spent the week after his trip to Grimmauld Place going through a lighter version of the training that he had been going through most of the summer. Every night, Ginny and Harry talked to each other through the mirrors. The two of them enjoyed each other's company and every night didn't want to end their conversation. Harry learned that on the last Saturday prior to the start of school that the Weasleys and the Grangers will be going to Diagon Alley to get their school supplies.

Harry decided that he should go and get his supplies that day also. Harry got up at seven in the morning to get ready for the day. He decided to stay hidden but be prepared to fight if necessary. Harry dressed in a dark blue cloak and keep the hood up to cover his face. He asked Nightlight and Blaze to stay behind so they wouldn't draw too much attention. The two reluctantly stayed behind but Harry had a feeling that they were going to follow anyway but stay hidden.

Harry used his permanent portkey to appear in Knockturn Alley. He made his way to Diagon Alley and proceeded to do his shopping early in the morning with the shops just opening for the day. Harry went to Gringott's first to withdraw an obscenely large amount of money for shopping that day and for the rest of the year. He withdrew over five sacks of money and shrunk them as he went shopping. Harry then went to Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions to get all new robes. He brought five new Gryffindor robes for himself and five new robes for Ron and Ginny. He also brought sets of white robes that either were trimmed in Crimson Red, Midnight Blue, Sky Blue, Forest Green, and Black. He replicated all of those robes with the Potter Family Crest over the left chest above his heart. He also brought sets of black robes that were either all black or trimmed with Crimson Red, Midnight Blue, Sky Blue, Forest Green, Silver, and White. He also replicated these robes with a set of robes with the Potter Family Crest on it. This gave him 24 casual robes to wear around. He brought sets of Brilliant Red, Dark Green, and Dark Blue dress robes and copied them like the other robes with the Family Crest. The last set of robes that Harry had made were special designed battle robes to help him fight.

The first of battle robes were all dark black with a cloak. It was fade resistant and designed to feel comfortable at all times. The robes major benefits came in three areas, it kept the body warm when in the cold, cool when in the heat, and dry when it is wet. The second benefit is that the robes don't make any noise and minimize any bodily noise that the person makes like breathing. The last area of benefit is the most needed. It reduces the effect of spells being shot at it. This combined with all the protection that Harry already had on him should protect him more than anybody would know in a fight.

The second set of robes were the same as the black battle robes but was white with what looked like strokes of shimmering red and blue around the outfit. When moving around in the white battle robes, it looks like fire dancing on the outfit. All of the robes were set to be done in three hours.

After telling the sales lady that he will be back later to pick up his robes, Harry went over to the trunk shop to pick up a new trunk to carry all the things that he will be bringing back with him to Hogwarts. After about half an hour of looking at different trunks, Harry ended up getting a seven compartment trunk that you can walk into it. The trunk looked just like any other trunk from the outside but on the inside, it was like a home with seven rooms. Harry decided to allow them to customize his trunk. Harry decided to have a library, a sitting room, a bedroom with bathroom, a kitchen, a potions lab, a training arena, and a guest room with bathroom. It took them fifteen minutes to get the trunk ready for him.

While the trunk was getting prepared, Harry walked over to Ollivander's to get a wand holster for his holly wand that he was going to attach to his right arm and slip the rose wand there to his lower right leg. After going to Ollivander's he headed over to the boot shop and got three set of boots. All of the boots were black but one of the pair of boots was designed to go with his battle robes. It was designed to do everything the robes did along with not leaving a trail anywhere he went.

Harry went back to pick up his trunk and headed over to the Apothecary. He brought a full set of supplies and potions for his

potions lab in his trunk. Harry than went to Flourish and Blotts to get his textbooks and some extra books to place in the library in his trunk. It took him about an hour to go through all of the books to get and placed it in his trunk. He headed over to Weasley Wizarding Wheezes and noticed that the twins were not there. Lee Jordan was running the shop and Harry picked out all kinds of pranks and added it to his trunk.

Harry walked around to various shops to do some window shopping until it was time to pick up his robes. After his wait, Harry picked up all of his robes and decided to go get something to eat. He went over to the ice cream shop to pick up something small to eat until he got something to eat at The Leaky Cauldron. While sitting there, Harry picked up the Daily Prophet that was on the table next to him. His attention was immediately drawn to the cover story.

Escape from Azkaban

By Rita Skeeter

Last night when the last remaining dementors abandoned their post at Azkaban prison, the captured Deatheaters from the Ministry of Magic last May escaped during a massive prison breakout. Initial reports stated that He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named showed up himself with an army of loyal Deatheaters to free all of his followers. As a result of the breakout it is now believed that all of those that broke free have joined the ranks of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. The Minister could not be reached for a comment. It would appear that our only hope will be Albus Dumbledore the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived.

Harry sighed and thought, 'This is great. Just not long ago they were calling us crazy and now they're placing all of their hopes in us. Fudge is a complete idiot, only if he would've taken precautions before maybe this wouldn't happen.' Harry heard several screams and people running and turned around to see what was happening.

Meanwhile, while Harry was running his errands during the morning, The Weasleys and Grangers showed up at Diagon Alley with Remus,

Tonks, and Mad-Eye. They were half way through their school supply shopping when they went to Flourish and Blotts to pick up their books. They were there for about fifteen minutes when Tonks ran in and told them they all had to leave.

Mr. Weasley asked, "What's wrong? Why do we need to leave now?"

Tonks said, "I just got a report that said Deatheaters have just broken out of Azkaban and Diagon Alley is a high level target right now because word got out that the kids are here and there is fear that they will chase after them while they are in the open."

Mrs. Weasley gathered everybody up and sent Bill and Charlie to finish their shopping. The kids were at the center with the adults forming the perimeter and now picked up Fred and George for added protection.

They reached the end of Diagon Alley where it is a brick wall that joins with the Leaky Cauldron. Mr. Weasley tapped his wand on the wall but it didn't open up for them to get through. They heard several screams and everybody drew their wand to where the sounds were coming from. There were several pops and Deatheaters were apparating into Diagon Alley.

Mr. Weasley yelled and pointed to a corner where everybody turned to look at, "Everybody go over to the corner! Remus, Tonks, Mad-Eye, and Molly, form a perimeter and everybody else draw your wands just in case this gets ugly."

The adults formed a shield around all the kids and the Grangers with everybody having their wands drawn. Mrs. Weasley pointed, "Look, George and Bill are coming to help us."

Bill and Charlie arrived shortly after Mrs. Weasley finished speaking and joined the perimeter to protect everybody else. Charlie sounding tired and trying to catch his breath said, "Deatheaters have launched an attack. The Aurors have shown up and are fighting them right now but they're out numbered. I don't know if they will be able to hold them off."

All of a sudden there was a flash in front of them at the entrance to The Leaky Cauldron of a person dressed in dark colored robes. Tonks and Remus turned their wands cautiously at the individual because they didn't know if the person that just appeared was friend or foe. The robed person drew a wand in both their right and left hand and stood there shooting spells down the alley.

Deatheaters apparated in front of the robed figure with their wands pointed at him. He started dueling with them but was outnumbered three to one. He managed to hold them back until he was hit with a cutting hex across the left side of his abdomen. The robed figure continued to fight will favoring his left side. Nobody came to assist him because they didn't want to leave the kids unprotected.

The robed figure managed to stun and bind one of his attackers and two more Deatheaters apparated over to him. This cycle of eliminating one Deatheater and two would show up to replace the fallen deatheater continued. Everybody watching the fight was in awe with the way the robed figure was fighting because of his fluid movements and balanced shielding, dodging, and attacking. At this point he managed to take out five Deatheaters. Everybody was amazed that he was able to fight off all of these Deatheaters all by himself.

He was hit but a bludging spell and flew back against the brick wall behind him. He got up slowly and at that moment, a blue phoenix and a white tiger appeared and charged the Deatheaters. When the robed figure managed to get back to his feet, his hood slipped off his head.

Ginny yelled and pointed, "That's Harry! We've got to help him."

Tonks, Remus, and Charlie rushed over to Harry and pulled him over to where everybody else was standing. Remus was tending to his wound while Harry was still in a slight daze. A moment later, Harry came around to the sound of Ginny's voice and Hermione holding his hand. Ginny said, "Come on Harry, come back. It's no time to play right now and find some place safe to get to."

Harry nodded grudgingly. He asked, "How is everybody?"

Hermione said, "Everybody is safe but the fighting is still going on right now."

Harry said, "You have to get out of here. It's not safe."

Ron said, "We can't because all of the exits out of Diagon Alley have been closed except for floo but a fireplace is too far from where we are."

Harry got up, looked around and saw that the fight was starting to wind down as the Aurors were starting to gain the advantage but it was still too dangerous. Harry held up his wand and said, "Summon!"

In a blink of an eye, Nightlight, Blaze, Sunrise, and Sunset appeared next to Harry. Harry said, "Sunrise, you take the Grangers out of here along with Ron back to Grimmauld Place. Sunset, you take Mrs. Weasley, Mr. Weasley, Fred, and George back to Grimmauld Place."

Mr. Weasley said, "We're not leaving anybody behind Harry. You better go."

Harry said, "I'll be fine. Don't worry about me Mr. Weasley. I have my way to get out of here." Harry turned to Nightlight and said, "I want you to take Ginny, Tonks, and Remus to Grimmauld Place." Harry then patted Blaze and said, "Blaze, will you please take Mad-Eye, Bill, and Charlie out of here."

Tonks said, "Harry, if all of you are able to leave than you should. Mad-Eye and me will stay to help the other Aurors fight."

Harry nodded and Tonks and Mad-Eye went to join the fight. Everybody else was taken back to Grimmauld Place. Harry used his portkey to get to Grimmauld Place.

A/N: Thank you to all of my reviewers and here are my responses to the chapter 5 reviews.

Dancerrdw: Thank you for the review.

Bommor: Thank you for the constructive criticism. I'll definitely take that into consideration when writing later chapters. The next few ones won't reflect it though because I've written ahead a few chapters already. I'm just spacing out the post to give me some time to write more so there isn't an unusually long delay for a posting.

Jouve25: Thank you for the review and there will be more issues due to Harry and Percy later : Thank you for the review. I'll check out your story soon. I'm trying not to read too many stories right now so I don't forget how mine is going.

Arye: It's correct that the blue and white phoenix is nightlight. I didn't realize the similarities until you mentioned it. As you can see, I have an obsession with Phoenixes.

Gardengnome3000: I hope this chapter doesn't disappoint you.

Beck: I'm glad to offer you the temporary 'fix' until this July with the next book.

Magic 8: Thank you and I will complete this story so don't worry. I just can't stand anything incomplete.

Chapter 7

Back at Grimmauld Place

Everybody reappeared back in the drawing room minus Tonks and Mad-Eye. Harry asked, “Is everybody fine?”

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley checked everybody and Mr. Weasley said, “It seems that everybody is fine, Thank you Harry for getting us out of Diagon Alley safely.”

“That’s good.” Harry noticed that his phoenix friends were still there so he continued on by saying, “I guess I should introduce everybody to the rest of my friends. Everybody here already knows Blaze and Nightlight.” He walked over to the gold and red phoenix sitting on the mantle saying, “This is Sunrise and the other she is Sunset,” while gesturing towards Sunset who was sitting on the window sill on the other side of the room.

Hermione said, “They’re really beautiful. It’s already extremely rare to have one pet phoenix but Harry, how did you get three?”

Harry was gently stroking Sunrise while looking at his animal friends affectionately when he said, “Well, these phoenixes are the guardians of the Potter family. To tell you the truth, I was just as surprised but glad. They’re really great friends.”

Ginny asked, “Do you have any more pet phoenixes?”

Harry snorted and said, “No, these are the only three phoenixes that I am friends with minus Fawkes but everybody already knows that. Nightlight, Sunrise, Sunset, and Blaze seem to take it upon themselves to protect me whenever I am in trouble but Sunrise and Sunset usually stays hidden while Nightlight and Blaze are always around me.”

Blaze went to pounce on him and the two of them played for a minute while everybody watched until Mrs. Weasley said, “Look at the time, I should get lunch ready. Once everybody gets back from Diagon Alley they will be pretty hungry.”

Mrs. Weasley and Mrs. Granger went into the kitchen to prepare a late lunch for everybody while Mr. Weasley and Mr. Granger walked over to a couch and continued to ask each other questions. Harry left the drawing room and walked upstairs towards Sirius' old room followed by all the kids, Remus, and his pets.

Once inside the room, Harry closed the door and walked over to Sirius' bed to lay on it after lifting his shirt above his abdomen. There was a large bruise there from bludging spell. The girls winced at it and Ginny said, "Harry, why didn't you tell anybody that you were hurt?"

Harry replied, "It's worse than it seems. I'll be able to heal it. Just stand back a bit while I take care of this." Harry took out his holly wand and waved it over his bruise and murmured a long incantation and the bruise was disappearing while everybody watched. After about a minute the bruise was gone and Harry lowered his shirt and got off of the bed.

It was than that Ron noticed that the room looked different, he said, "Harry, what did you do to the room? It looks so much better than the rest of the house."

Harry grinned and said, "I'm glad you like it. You see the last time I came here; I showed up in this room and couldn't stand the room very much because it reminded me of so much from last year. I decided to change it up a bit so it wouldn't feel so bad."

Lupin said, "It looks really good Harry. I know that Sirius would have liked what you did in this room."

"Thanks."

Ron said, "That was some bloody great fighting you did back there at Diagon Alley. What else can you do mate?"

Harry said, "Thanks Ron. I can do a bit more than that when it comes to spell work and agility but I'm still disappointed that I got hit by that

spell. It was just too bad I couldn't last a bit longer. Now, word might get out that I am a better duelist."

Hermione asked, "How was it that you knew that we were in trouble?"

Harry replied, "I was having some ice cream when all hell broke out at Diagon Alley. It was just luck that I found you because Nightlight pulled me to the top of a store by the Leaky Cauldron and I saw everybody gathered in the corner. That's when I noticed that there were about five Death Eaters making their way towards you all so I decided to intercept them. When I showed up they were frozen for a split second from the shock of me just showing up in front of them so I managed to stun two of them before the rest of their friends snapped back to reality."

Remus said, "You know it's not good for you to take on a fight like that. Don't get me wrong. I know that you can defend yourself but we would rather take the safe approach with you than fight head on with you in the front taking the brunt of the attack."

"It will happen no matter what so I would prefer to bring the fight to them than let them continue to do this type of gorilla warfare of hit and run."

Remus turned to Hermione, Ron, and Ginny and said, "Can you guys give Harry and me a moment? There is something I need to talk to him about."

The three of them nodded and left the room. Remus casted a silencing charm on the room than pulled out the chair by the desk, sat down, and faced Harry when he said, "Harry, did you tell them about the prophecy yet?"

Harry thought, 'I wonder if he knows the contents of the prophecy. I thought that only Dumbledore and I know about it.' Harry ended up saying, "Remus, do you know the contents of the prophecy?"

"I don't know the entire prophecy. About the extent that I know was that it has something to do with you and Voldemort."

"I see. There's much more to it than that. You can not tell anybody what I'm about to tell you."

"Of course, you can tell me anything and trust me with your secret."

Harry took a deep breath and sighed before saying, "In summary, the prophecy said that the fight will come down to either Voldemort or me. Only one of us will survive the fight. Neither can survive while the other survives."

There was a moment of silence than Remus broke the silence by saying, "This would explain why you were so intent on hiding to train. It still doesn't mean that you should go looking for trouble though."

"I don't go looking for trouble. I just always end up wherever a fight breaks out. Believe me; I would like to avoid fighting if possible."

It was at that moment that Harry noticed a pair of extendable ears making its way under the door. Harry thought, 'It's a good thing that they weren't listening to the conversation before because I really don't want to face them yet. I guess I am going to have to teach them a lesson for eavesdropping in on my conversation.' He motioned to Remus to remain quiet and pointed to the extendable ear on the ground and winked at Remus.

Harry said, "I'm really glad that we had this talk. You're right, Hermione is definitely hot."

Remus finally caught up and played along by saying, "You know Harry, and if I were younger I would definitely be after that girl. Of course I could still chase after her now. Nobody would have to know."

"You know, you'll have to get over me for her. I'm sure she'll be great at snogging." Harry was working hard to keep a straight face.

"I think you are right about that. Hermione definitely has that innocent school girl look going for her. Who knows what else she learned in books besides magic."

The two of them were trying not to fall on the ground and laugh hysterically but managed to compose themselves. Harry feeling a bit hungry said, "Let's go downstairs and get something to eat. I'm sure Mrs. Weasley and Mrs. Granger are done."

Remus said, "I'm getting hungry also. I'm sure the food is ready. Let's go."

The two of them watched the extendable ear pull its way back under the door, waited for the kids to run and left the room and headed for the kitchen. On their way down, Harry heard the door to Hermione and Ginny's room closing. They reached the kitchen and Mrs. Weasley said, "You're here. Good, the food is just about ready. Harry dear, can you go get the rest of the kids so we can eat?"

Harry said, "No problem Mrs. Weasley." Harry left and went to Ginny's room. He knocked on the door and waited for somebody to open the door. Ron opened the door while glaring at Harry and said, "Did you need something?"

Harry thought, 'I guess Ron was at the door and heard what was being said.' Harry looked into the room and saw Hermione looking away and Ginny glaring at Hermione. 'I guess all three of them were outside of the door but why is Ginny looking at Hermione like that.' Harry ended up saying, "Lunch is ready, I was sent up here to get everybody."

Harry left and waited for everybody to come down to eat. Ron and Ginny sat down first and Hermione sat down opposite of them. Harry sat down to Hermione's left while Remus sat down to her right. Hermione looked very uncomfortable sitting there between the two of them as everybody else sat down at the table and started to eat.

Harry said, "Hermione, you're looking very nice today."

She replied, "Thank you Harry."

Harry grabbed her hand and said, "You know Hermione, I was wondering if I can talk to you a little later tonight, just the two of us."

Ron, Ginny, and Hermione all gagged on their food before regaining their composure. Harry leaned closer to Hermione's ears and whispered, "I hope you can teach me how to snog better."

Hermione shot all the food in her mouth out and all over Ron. She turned to look at Harry and said, "Harry James Potter, how can you say such a thing!" She looked over to Ron and Ginny and said, "He asked me to go snog!"

Remus stood up and said, "Harry, how dare you ask a girl something like that. I am very disappointed in you." He placed a hand on Hermione's back and said, "Hermione, let's go."

Hermione's eyes went wide for she didn't know what to do. She looked pleadingly to Ron and Ginny for some help. Ron stood up and said, "Harry, how could you say something like that. Leave Hermione alone!"

Harry couldn't hold it in much longer; he broke down and laughed along with Remus with everybody staring at them as if they were crazy. Harry said, "I guess the three of you shouldn't be listening on a private conversation."

Ron and Hermione dropped back down into their seat and Ginny let out a breath that she seemed to be holding onto for quite some time. Harry explained to everybody else in the room what was going on and there was another wave of laughter at the expense of Ron, Hermione, and Ginny.

The laughter was interrupted by a dirty, smelly, and rude house elf that made his way into the kitchen. Everybody froze as Harry and Kreatcher stared at each other from across the room. The room seemed to split to two sides as an open path was made between Kreatcher and Harry.

Harry's mind started to race, 'I'm going to kill him. That little treacherous bastard, I'm going to put him out of his misery. It's time to get some revenge for Sirius. Should I use two wands or just one wand? Forget the wand; I'll take him out with just my hands.'

Harry's train of thought was interrupted with Remus saying, "Harry, Kreatcher now belongs to you because you are now the master of this house."

Harry snapped out of his trance and charged towards Kreatcher. He grabbed the house elf by his neck with both hands and lifted Kreatcher off the ground and started strangling him. Mr. Weasley, Ron, and Remus managed to pull Harry and Kreatcher away from each other. Harry started to yell, "Let me go! I'm going to kill that house elf for betraying Sirius!"

Remus said, "Harry, calm down. Killing Kreatcher isn't going to help anything."

Harry flicked his hands and both of his rose wands came out from their holsters. The anger in Harry was building up with every passing second. His magical energy was radiating from him and everybody in the room could feel all the power coming from him. Everybody slid away slightly except for Remus who was now joined by Ginny who was also trying to calm down Harry but he couldn't hear anything except for a part of killing Kreatcher in Remus' first statement when he was trying to calm Harry down.

Professor Dumbledore showed up at that moment and also had his wand drawn. Harry lifted his right wand and shot a bludging spell at Kreatcher and Professor Dumbledore jumped out in front of the spell and casted the Protego spell and absorbed Harry's spell.

Harry yelled, "Professor, get out of the way and let me get to Kreatcher!"

Professor Dumbledore walked towards Harry and placed a hand on his shoulder and said, "You must calm down Harry."

At that moment, Fawkes, Nightlight, Sunrise, and Sunset showed up and sang a peaceful trill that managed to calm everybody down. Blaze showed up at the end of the phoenix song in his adult form growling and ready to pounce on Kreatcher. Harry placed a hand on Blaze to calm the white tiger down.

Ron was still holding onto Kreatcher so he couldn't run and disappear. He asked, "What are we going to do about Kreatcher?"

Dobby and Winky showed up right after Ron finished asking his question. They were now staring at Kreatcher and with a wave of their hands Kreatcher was removed from Ron and held by Dobby and Winky.

Professor Dumbledore said, "Harry, I need to speak to you about something of importance."

Harry nodded and said, "I'm sorry Professor for yelling at you but feel free to discuss it in front of everybody because I don't think that I could move right now."

"Alright Harry. Dobby and Winky have come to ask you something but asked me to ask on their behalf." Harry nodded and Dumbledore continued, "Winky has lived approximately a year without being in service to a family and desires to be back in one. Dobby thought that you might be able to use her assistance."

Harry looked over at Winky and saw her eyes filled with hope that Harry would take her into service. Harry walked over to Winky, kneeled down on one knee in front of Winky and asked, "Winky, do you want to work for me?"

Winky said, "It would be a great honor to work for the Potter family. Winky don't want to be free. Winky want to be with Harry Potter Sir."

The room was quiet for a few seconds and than Harry said, "Winky, if you come to work for me than I would like to give you an allowance, give you clothes, you should feel free to approach me if you have any question or concerns, come to me if you feel being mistreated, and if you feel like quitting, all you have to do is come let me know. Winky, you have to agree to those conditions if you wish to become a house elf for the Potter family."

Winky's eyes lit up and tackled Harry when she said excitedly, "I would be a great honor for Winky to be your house elf. Winky will be a good house elf for Master Harry."

Harry laughed when he fell over when Winky tackled him. He said, "Winky, please just call me Harry and not master."

"Alright, Mas...Harry."

Harry noticed that Dobby looked a little down so he asked Dobby, "What's wrong Dobby?"

Dobby reluctantly said, "It has always been Dobby's dream to be Harry Potter's house elf."

Harry sighed and new that Dobby was telling the truth. Harry looked over at Professor Dumbledore and saw the twinkle in the Head Master's eyes shining brilliantly as he nodded towards Harry. Harry turned back to Dobby and said, "Dobby, if you want to, I would be honored if you came to work for me also with the same stipulations that I just gave Winky."

Dobby's eyes lit up and said, "Harry Potter is a great wizard. Dobby would love to come to work for Harry Potter Sir."

"I'm glad that you're happy Dobby." It was than that Harry remembered about Kreatcher who was slowly backing away from everybody. In a flash, Harry's right rose wand came out and pointed it at Kreather's head.

Dobby and Winky stood in front of Harry and Winky said, "You are bound to faithfully serve your master and you have failed to do so. Kreatcher, you have broken the most sacred bond of a house elf and a master. The sentence for breaking this rule is death."

Kreatcher started yelling, "Kreatcher did not do anything wrong. It is Harry Potter that killed Master Black. It was him that led Master Black into a trap. Harry Potter killed Sirius Black!" With that last statement, Kreatcher bursted into flames and burned to death.

Dobby told Harry, "Kreatcher tried to lie his way out of what he did. As a result, he was burned to death. It is the biggest crime for a house

elf to betray their master. Kreatcher dying was beyond anybody's control, it is built into house elf magic."

Instantly after Kreatcher bursted into flames and turned to ashes, Harry became frozen. He didn't even hear what Dobby was telling him. Harry fell to his knees with tears building up in his eyes. All he could think was, 'Kreatcher was right. I killed Sirius.'

Ron, Hermione, and Ginny pulled Harry up and back into the kitchen. Everybody returned to the kitchen. Ginny asked, "Harry are you alright?"

Harry looked up, panting, and said, "I killed Sirius. Kreatcher was right."

"It was not your fault. Remember, it was a trap that nobody knew about. We all fell for the trap. Sirius came because he wanted to. Would you have waited if you thought Sirius was walking into a trap?"

"It may not be entirely my fault but if I weren't there in the first place than Sirius would have never came and he wouldn't have died."

"You were lied to; remember there was a reason why Kreatcher died back there. He died because he betrayed Sirius."

"Why does this always happen? Why do those around me die?"

"It's all Voldemort's fault. Never forget that."

"As long as people are around me than they will not be safe. Look at what happened last year; everybody was injured because of my actions."

"We went there willingly. We know what the risks are for being your friends. Don't seclude yourself and push everybody away."

"I have to do that. This way you all will be safe. I'm not sure if I can take much more of this."

"Harry, you can try to push us away but we are not going to go quietly. It's our decision to make. Not yours."

Hermione said, "Ginny's right. We don't blame you for what happened last year or all the years before that. It's our choice and we are going to stand by you no matter where you go."

Ron placed a hand on Harry's shoulder and said, "Harry, we're going to be by your side if you want to or not. We're a team that has done well so far. You're my best mate and I'm not going to stand by and watch."

Mr. Granger interrupted by saying, "Harry, we have heard about you so much from my daughter. In all honesty, I wished that she wouldn't be in so much danger year after year but we know why she does what she does. Always true to her friends and standing up for what she believes is right. I want her to live a safer life but I believe that she is safer being with you and all the dangers you three went through for your first four years and six went through last year than for her to stand by and watch like everybody else."

Harry replied, "I'm sorry for putting Hermione and your family through so much trouble."

Mrs. Granger replied, "Don't be sorry. You and Ron brought life back into her eyes ever since your first year at Hogwarts. Before that time, she depended solely on her books and now the strength in her heart shines just as brightly as how smart she is."

Harry turned to look at Hermione who was blushing from her mother's compliments. He said, "I promise Mr. and Mrs. Granger that I will do everything within my power to protect and keep Hermione safe. I'll willingly die just to make sure she can live just one more day."

Hermione and Mrs. Granger grabbed Harry and gave him a long hug and held him so tight that he had difficult time breathing. Mr. Granger shook Harry's hand and said, "I know that you would and we hope that that day never comes."

After Mrs. Granger let Harry go, Hermione said, "Harry, I would also willingly give up my life to protect you also. Never forget that you're one of my best friends."

Harry gave her a hug and the two of them released each other and Hermione backed away towards her parents who were now gathered by the fireplace. Hermione stood in front of her dad and her dad wrapped his hands around his daughter and gave her a kiss on the top of her head with her mother holding onto Hermione's left hand.

Harry turned to face the rest of the room. He looked at everybody and making eye contact with each person in the room. He saw Ron, Ginny, Fred, George, Charlie, Bill, Mr. Weasley, Mrs. Weasley, Remus, and Professor Dumbledore. Harry took a deep breath and said, "I hope you all know that I would do anything for each one of you. I would also have no problem laying down my life to make sure everybody here stays together."

Ginny and Mrs. Weasley gave Harry a hug that was similar to the one that Mrs. Granger and Hermione gave Harry. Remus said, "Don't worry too much about what is going to happen in the future. Live your life as a teenager should be."

Remus came up and gave Harry a hug while the rest of the men gave Harry a handshake. Harry sighed and whispered, "Neither can live while the other survives."

Remus whispered, "Don't worry about it too much. Train and prepare for the fight. When the time comes you'll be ready and finish what you did when you were one."

Harry nodded and Mrs. Weasley who had a tear in her eyes said, "Now, this has been quite an eventful day. Everybody sit down and eat. Albus, you'll be joining us, won't you?"

Professor Dumbledore said, "It would be my pleasure to join everybody for lunch."

Everybody sat down and ate lunch with the adults sitting off to one side talking about Order business in hushed tones, Ron shoveling

food into his mouth, Fred and George talking about their next product for their business, Mrs. Weasley and Mrs. Granger running around and serving food, Ginny and Hermione silently eating and glancing back and forth between Harry and Ron respectively, and Harry playing with his food but eating quickly enough so nobody would comment.

Near the end of the meal, the fireplace to Grimmauld Place roared with green flames with Tonks and Mad Eye coming out of the fireplace. At that moment, silence rang through the entire house as they waited for what Tonks and Mad Eye had to say about what happened. Mad Eye said, "Everything has been taken care of. We've captured fifteen Deatheaters. Thankfully, nobody died in today's attack. The Aurors have everything taken care of."

Harry noticed blood coming from Tonks' right leg. She seemed to be trying to hide it from everybody. Harry pulled out his holly wand and instantly cleared the kitchen table. He levitated Tonks into the air and everybody laughed at her surprise and discomfort. Harry laid her on the table and walked over by her right leg and ripped that part of her clothes a little wider so he can see the wound. Everyone except for Professor Dumbledore was shocked because they didn't realize that she was injured. Harry lifted his wand over the wound and Tonks' leg started to glow as her wound was cleaned and instantly healed. Harry muttered another spell and her clothes were repaired.

Tonks with a large grin said, "Thanks Harry. I didn't know that you knew how to heal wounds."

Harry smiled back to her and said, "I've practiced many different types of things. This is just one of my surprises that you happen to discover. How did you get hurt?"

Tonks blushed in embarrassment when she said, "Well, I was stunning this deatheater when another one tried to hex me and when I jumped to dodge out of the way, I kind of hit a store post."

A few people in the room tried to hide their laugh about another one of Tonks' clumsy escapades. Harry lifted Tonks off the ground and eased her onto her feet again. With a flick of his wand again, all of the

food that was there before reappeared. Harry recognizing the surprised expressions on a few people and said, "Why don't we continue to eat? I'm sure that Tonks and Mad Eye must be hungry."

Mad Eye and Tonks sat down to eat along with Order members and Mr. and Mrs. Granger who are now members of the Order and used as contacts in the muggle world. The kids were ushered out of the kitchen so the adults could discuss what happened earlier in greater detail. Fred and George became members in the Order so Ron, Hermione, and Ginny were left alone in the drawing room.

The three of them were sitting in the drawing room waiting for the meeting to end. Ron and Harry were playing wizard's chess while Hermione was reading a book and Ginny watching the chess match with the occasional suggestion for Harry's next move. Hermione broke the silence by asking, "Harry, it was a good thing that you did with Dobby and Winky. Don't get me wrong I think that house elves should be free but it was their choice so I'm not mad at you but what are they going to do now?"

Harry stood up and walked over to the window in the drawing room and stared out into the setting sun. He walked back and pulled out his holly wand, raised it in the air, and said, "Summon!" After Nightlight, Sunrise, Sunset, and Blaze showed up, Harry called out, "Dobby, Winky, can you come here?"

The two house elves showed up in an instant and Dobby asked, "Did Harry need something?"

Harry smiled at the two house elves and said, "I want you to meet Nightlight, Sunrise, Sunset, and Blaze. They are also my friends." Harry introduced the phoenixes and the white tiger to Dobby and Winky. After they were acquainted with each other, he said, "Dobby and Winky, Sunrise and Sunset are going to take you to a place that I've been over the summer. When you get there let Rain and Ray know what has happened and they should fill you in on who and what they do. I want your primary responsibilities to rest with Grimmauld Place for now. Just take care of the needs of the people here and take care of the house. Remember though that whatever it is that

Rain and Ray say that you should keep it a secret for now. Everything will reveal itself in time.”

Dobby and Winky were excited that they received their first assignment. After a short bit of excitement, Sunrise and Sunset took Dobby and Winky away. After they left, Hermione asked, “Harry, who are Ray and Rain?”

Harry sighed for he knew that Hermione is too perceptive to get anything past her and said, “They’re two friends of mine. Don’t worry; you’ll meet them later on.”

Hermione knew that she wasn’t going to get anything else out of him and decided to give up for now because she knew that she’ll be able to meet them later on. Harry and Ron sat back down to continue their chess game. Hermione continued to read her book and after watching Harry lose two more games, Ginny decided to read a book herself.

After the Order meeting ended and people started to leave, Remus came into the drawing room to join the kids. Harry told Remus, “I’ve instructed Dobby and Winky to take care of this house and the people here so if you need anything just let Dobby and Winky know. Can you let anybody else that enters this house know?”

Remus said, “Thank you Harry. It would be helpful to the order if they don’t have to worry about taking care of this house and have at least somebody here to guard the house if anything should happen. Maybe with all of their cleaning than this place might not be so depressing.”

Harry thought, ‘This place is pretty depressing. I wonder what we can do to make it more comfortable.’ He than said, “I have an idea of what we could do.” Harry pulled out his holly wand and muttered a series of long charms and enchantments and the room and all of its things started to glow. After about five minutes of doing the charms and enchantments there was a bright flash that temporarily blinded everyone. They were now joined by Tonks, Mad Eye, Hestia Jones, Dumbledore, McGonagall, the Grangers, and the Weasleys. The flash ended and the entire house and all of its furniture changed. The furniture was plush and more comfortable. The rooms had various

color schemes to the red room which was painted with all of its furniture in colors of red and white to other colors like blue and green. The colors were usually pretty soft and brought a calming feeling. The bedrooms each had at least one large four poster bed, a dresser, and a desk. He ended up adding a few rooms that reflected two wings to the house. The west wing had twenty single bedrooms over two floors with two bedrooms joined by a bathroom. The color scheme in each room reflected what the occupant wanted it to be. The east wing now housed two potions laboratories, an armory, an infirmary, a large meeting room, a holding cell, three training rooms, and a two story solarium that housed various plants and an indoor garden centered by a large fountain. The east wing is also two stories long. These two wings were in addition to the current house.

Harry told them, "Well, I thought everybody could use a change. I guess we should go search the new Grimmauld Place."

The entire party went through the house and searched the various rooms in the house and took up new rooms throughout the house. The extra bedrooms were set aside for any Order member that needed to stay for any amount of time. When they finished searching the house everybody returned to the drawing room.

Everybody looked at Harry in awe with Professor Dumbledore's eyes shining brightly like he wasn't surprised that Harry could do that kind of magic. Remus said, "Harry, I didn't realize that you could do that. You definitely made this place much more comfortable for everybody who stays here and for the Order members who may visit from time to time."

Harry said, "Thanks Moony, but I believe it is time for me to go. There's much I need to do prior to the start of the school year."

Remus, Hermione, Ron, and Ginny tried to get Harry to stay but they couldn't persuade him. After bidding everyone good night, he called out for Nightlight by whistling and the two disappeared in a ball of flames.

A/N: Now to my reviewers from Chapter 6

Jouve25: Thank you for the review and I agree, Harry still has much to learn.

Nightwing 509: There will be a few more surprises in the future. I hope you enjoy those also.

Dancerrdw: Thank you.

N6uos: Thank you.

Bommor: No problem. I'm thinking of keeping an updating schedule of one chapter per 4 to 5 days.

Whitefish: Thank you, I try not to have errors so it's easier to read.

Chapter 8

Return to Hogwarts

Ginny, Ron, Hermione, Remus, Tonks, Mr. Weasley, and Mrs. Weasley were gathered in the kitchen of Grimmauld Place talking about the security detail that will escort the kids to Kings Cross two days prior to the start of the new school year. Ginny was distracted during the entire conversation because she was unable to mirror call Harry all day. Ginny zoned out again when Hermione nudged her in the ribs to bring her back to reality just when Mrs. Weasley said, “Remus will be shadowing Ron, Tonks will be following Hermione, and I will be following Ginny.”

Remus continued off where Mrs. Weasley let off by saying, “Arthur, Bill, and Charlie are going to be the advance guards that will make sure everything is safe before we arrive. This leaves Mad Eye, Emmeline Vance, and me as your rear guards to make sure nobody follows you three.”

Tonks said, “This is similar to what we did when we escorted Harry here last year. It may seem a bit much but it’s better to be safe.”

Hermione asked, “What about Harry? How is Harry getting to school and is there going to be anybody to protect him?”

The room was quiet for a short while than Remus said, “We don’t know anything about Harry’s travel plans. We’ll be ready to help protect him if he shows up at the train station but right now Harry is on his own.”

At that moment, the fireplace in the kitchen roared with green flames and out came George in a hurry and out of breath. Shortly after George came through the fireplace, the flames roared again and Fred came through. Both of them were leaning on each other and looked very tired like they had been running for an hour.

Mrs. Weasley jumped up from her seat and asked, “What’s wrong? Why are the two of you here and out of breath?”

George threw a sheet of parchment onto the middle of the table and panted, "Read that out loud. Harry is in trouble."

At hearing that, Remus took hold of the parchment. He only looked at it for two seconds and turned white. Mr. Weasley and Mrs. Weasley leaned over to see what Remus was looking at and were shocked at what they saw. Mrs. Weasley bursted into tears and Mr. Weasley rushed to the other side of Remus to comfort his wife. The kids were confused at what was going on, all the adults looked heart broken and Remus and Mr. Weasley looked like they were trying to hold back tears. Fred and George didn't seem like there was any joy left in their body. The two of them were still breathing hard while collapsed into chairs next to the kids. Hermione took the parchment away from Remus who was still in shock and didn't seem to notice Hermione taking the parchment away.

Hermione looked at the parchment and gasped. She started shaking her head and said, "No. This can't happen."

Ron took a look at what Hermione was holding and fell back down into his seat. He and Hermione were finding it hard to breathe as Hermione dropped the parchment. Ginny slowly grabbed the parchment from the table and tears immediately formed at what she saw.

The parchment had an enchanted picture on it. There were ten figures dressed in black robes wearing white masks celebrating. Two of the figures in the middle were holding up what looked like somebody who was dead. It was Harry. His body was beaten up and bruised with blood covering his robes. The Deatheaters were celebrating because they managed to capture and kill Harry Potter. There was a note at the bottom of the picture that said, "One of your heroes is now dead. Harry Potter was easily killed and soon enough your last hero, Dumbledore, will join Potter."

Ginny dropped back to her seat and cried as everybody just stared at the parchment as tears started to fall from Remus and Ron. Ron went to pull Ginny into a hug to comfort her as the flames from the fireplace continued to roar as more and more Order members arrived at Grimmauld Place with copies of the parchment in their hand.

Shortly afterwards, Dumbledore showed up with the assistance of Fawkes in the middle of the kitchen. He had no twinkle in his eyes, looked much rundown, and aged.

Professor Dumbledore asked, "Am I safe to assume that these fliers are all over England?"

Everybody in the room nodded and he continued to say, "We need to call an emergency Order meeting."

Mrs. Weasley ushered the children out of the room. Ron, Hermione, and Ginny went into the girls' room and sat there in silence. Ron was sitting on the ground between Hermione and Ginny who were sitting on their respective beds. After about half an hour of sitting in the dimly lit room, Hermione and Ginny were startled by Ron jumping up, punching the wall, and yelling, "Why did he have to do that? Why the bloody hell did Harry have to go off and get himself...?"

Ron couldn't finish what he wanted to say. Hermione went to hug him and the two collapsed onto the floor hugging each other with her mumbling comforting words into his ear that Ginny couldn't make out. Before they knew it, the three of them fell asleep from emotional exhaustion with Ginny sleeping on her bed and Hermione and Ron sleeping on the floor.

The next day, Grimmauld Place was extremely sedated. There were hardly any talking except for the occasional hellos and goodbyes. Dobby and Winky were also sad and were barely able to get their chores done. Dobby and Winky were setting the table for dinner when all of a sudden they looked at each other very startled and disappeared with a snap of their fingers. The Grangers, the Weasleys, Remus, Mad Eye, Tonks, and Dumbledore were at the table when the house elves disappeared. Everybody caught the odd expression on the two house elves but only Ron commented on it. He said, "That's weird. Why did run off like that?"

Professor Dumbledore seemed to be deep in thought with a hint of a twinkle returning to his eyes as everybody else seemed to shrug off what just happened including Ron. That night, everybody turned in

early but everybody seemed to be lying awake in bed just staring at the ceiling.

The next day, the Order along with the Grangers and the Weasleys arrived at Kings Cross station with no problem. When they arrived onto platform 9 ¾ it did not seem as crowded as in years past. The platform was quiet as there wasn't the same excitement as years past of friends meeting each other again after their summer break. Ron, Hermione, and Ginny ran into Luna and Neville in one of the train compartments to put their stuff away before they went off to the prefects meeting. Hermione was telling Ginny about prefect duties because Ginny became a 5th year prefect.

Hermione said, "Hi Neville. Hi Luna. How was your summer?"

Everybody said gave their greetings and Neville responded, "It was great until a few days ago." Nobody said anything because they knew that Neville was talking about the incident with Harry.

Luna followed up by saying, "It's good to see you all again," in her usual airy voice.

Ginny asked, "Can the two of you watch our trunks until we get back from the Prefects meeting, please?"

They bid each other goodbye and Ron, Hermione, and Ginny went off to their meeting near the front of the train. The meeting ended when they had completed ¾ of the journey to Hogwarts. Ron and Neville spent the rest of the train ride playing wizards chess, while Ginny and Luna were exchanging stories about their summer, with Hermione reading a book.

Just before the train arrived at Hogsmeade station, the slide door to their compartment was slammed open and appeared Draco Malfoy with Crabbe and Goyle at his side. Draco said, "Aww, look it's the squib, weasels, a mudblood, and loony. What are you going to do now since Potty isn't here to protect you anymore?"

Before the Slytherin trio knew what happened, they had four wands pointed directly at them with a few more pointed at them from various

DA members that were standing by when Draco made his appearance known.

In a low and jarringly calm voice, Ron said, "You better run or we'll finish you off right here right now." Draco's eyes went wide and the three Slytherin made a hasty retreat to the comfort of the area of the train mainly occupied by other members of their house.

There were no other incidents on the train ride. The four Gryffindors bid farewell to Luna who made her way over to the Ravenclaw table as the rest of them headed over to their own table. The Great Hall did not have its usual splendor of color from the various houses and the professors seemed very tired and sad with the exception of Professor Snape. Instead of where the house banners would've flown, there were black banners floating under a completely black ceiling with the exception of the words, "In Memory of Harry James Potter."

When everybody was settled at their house tables, Professor McGonagall led in the first year students. They were huddled together with students that had fear shown on their face to others with a sense of awe at the beauty of the Great Hall. Ginny were among the students that felt sorry for these first years, as they were walking in, she said, "These kids are in for a rough year. Just look at them, they are full of fear with everything that has been going. They're just so innocent. They should be enjoying their childhood."

Hermione, Ron, and Neville nodded their agreement. Then Hermione pointed and said, "Look! It looks like Professor Lupin has returned and Tonks is on the staff now. I bet you they're our new Defense teachers."

The sorting hat began to sing its song as Hermione finished her statement so the other three couldn't say anything about Remus returning but all of them had smiling faces at the prospect that it might be true.

With another year another class arrives,
'Tis my burden to sort each class,
This year brings with it another trial,
Fear not for a hero will rise,

For this hero will it be one of you,

If it is Slytherin,
Than cunning and power he prides,
For true to Hufflepuff,
Than loyalty and equality will rise,
Into Ravenclaw,
Only a sharp mind and books are prized,
Or is it Gryffindor,
Where brazen courage can't hide,

In order to survive than this hero decides,
For he belongs not in one house or two,
It may be a boy or a girl of truth,

For warnings of the past were not heeded,
The dark days are here,
Within the dark a light will appear,
It will be bright for all hopes to fill,

Remember now a hero will rise.
It is now time to sort one and all,
Come and be called to witness the scene,
For the sorting is done for one and all.

There were some light clapping for most of the students were confused at what the sorting hat was talking about. After the little bits of clapping died down, Professor McGonagall went to stand by the sorting hat on the stool and said, "When I call your name come forward and sit on this stool to be sorted into your houses."

She looked around at the first years, sighed, pulled unrolled part of the parchment that she held in her right hand and said, "Anderson, Faith."

A short girl with curly brown hair slowly made her way up to the stool and sat on it. Professor McGonagall placed the hat on the girl's head and after some light murmuring from the sorting hat, it yelled out, "Ravenclaw!"

The girls face went from fear to relief as she hopped off the stool and joined the table that was clapping joyfully for her. This process continued on for the rest of the first years. Then there was a taller young lady standing alone facing Professor McGonagall. She was about 5' 9" tall, had blonde hair that curled near her shoulders, brilliant blue eyes, and had a light tan on her skin. She looked very confident as she stood there.

McGonagall stopped calling out names and turned to look at the headmaster. Professor Dumbledore stood up and said, "We have an exchange student this year from America. Her name is Kayla Rapp. While Miss Rapp will be studying at Hogwarts, Miss Pear from Hufflepuff will be studying at The American Institute of Magic. Please make her feel welcome for she will be placed in with the 6th years." The Great Hall erupted with the sound of clapping to welcome the new girl with some whistling from the male population. After the clapping died down, Dumbledore motioned with his right hand for Kayla to walk up and be sorted. Many of the guys were drooling over her beauty with many girls trying to knock some sense in their boyfriends or friends for making a fool of themselves.

Kayla took her seat on the stool and the sorting hat was placed on her. The sorting hat was debating between Ravenclaw and Gryffindor just loud enough that the rest of the hall was hearing it debate with itself. It paused and than yelled out, "Gryffindor!" The Gryffindor table erupted with excitement to welcome Kayla to their house. Kayla went down from the table and sat herself between Ginny and Hermione due to Hermione calling the girl over to join her. Kayla shook hands with all those around her and everything quieted back down as Professor Dumbledore stood up again and raised his hands to signal for silence.

When it was silent in the hall again, Dumbledore said, "I want to first start of welcoming everybody back to Hogwarts for another year." There was a pause for clapping. He than continued, "As you all have noticed, the house banners have been removed and black banners are floating under the bewitched ceiling, will everybody please bow your heads for a moment of silence to remember a great wizard named Harry Potter who passed away two days ago."

There was absolute silence in the hall and amazingly enough, half of the Slytherins were also bowing their heads and observing the moment of silence. After about half a minute, everybody lifted their heads and Dumbledore continued on by saying, "We have a surprise this year for everybody. Just this morning, I received a formal letter from the Headmaster of Durmstrang. Because of what happened in the Triwizard Tournament two years ago, Durmstrang has issued a challenge to Hogwarts to determine which school is best based on three different arenas." The solemn quiet that came with Harry's moment of silence disappeared as there were cheers from students and many yelling out, "We accept."

The Headmaster raised his hand again to calm the students than continued on by saying, "I see that Hogwarts have many students that will stand and defend the honor of this school." He took a deep breath and said, "The first arena lies in knowledge. There will be a written and practical during this part of the competition in three subjects as follows: Potions, Charms, Transfiguration, DADA, and any related fields. The second arena deals with athletics. The competition will be with the all star team from Durmstrang versus the all star team from Hogwarts." Many students became excited which included Ron and Ginny who started yelling, "We'll crush them."

Professor Dumbledore continued on, "The last task will be dueling. There will be a dueling tournament with five students from each school. For the nature of this competition, there is a possibility of a tie due to the possible results in each area. If there is a tie, there will be a random drawing where the two people representing their respective schools will duel to determine the winner. This competition is only opened to fifth years and up and a ten slot All-Star team will be selected to represent the school. Only half of the members of the team will be competing in each event except for quidditch which will have seven people for obvious reasons."

The students began to talk amongst themselves about the competition when the students quieted down again when Dumbledore said, "Selection for the team will be random. If you wish to compete than please submit your name with your head of house and a drawing will be conducted at dinner tomorrow night. Well, think about it tonight and tomorrow. I have one more announcement. I would like to

introduce to you your new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Remus Lupin and Nymphadora Tonks. Due to the recent events, the ministry found it wise to have an extra defense teacher to help prepare students better.”

There was a loud roar of cheering and clapping to welcome back Remus and welcome Tonks who were both blushing due to their welcome while they were standing and bowing to greet the students. With a wave of his hand, the tables filled with food from carved turkey to mashed potatoes with gravy to corn on the cob to cheesecake. There was so much food that it was inconceivable that the entire school would be able to finish all of the food. After the food appeared Dumbledore said, “Tuck in,” than sat down and the feast began.

A hooded figure stood outside the Great Hall thinking, ‘Looks like I’m going to have to do this. It seems like everybody lost their hope. Something big must be done to bring back people’s hopes.’

There was lots of noise in the Great Hall now as most of the students were talking about who would be good and who would not be good for representing Hogwarts. Half way through the feast there was a loud noise heard through out the Great Hall. Everybody was alarmed and confused at what was happening. Than it happened again, there was a loud, “Boom!” shaking the large wooden doors to the Great Hall. After the second boom, Dumbledore and the teachers stood up with their wands drawn.

At that moment, a girl yelled, “Look, at the ceiling!”

The ceiling slowly changed as the night sky started to show through with stars shining brightly in its backset. The words, “In Memory of Harry James Potter,” slowly disappeared. Then clouds could be seen floating across the ceiling and a crescent moon appeared over the eastern part of the sky. The words, “Tom Riddle, it is time for you to run and hide for I have returned, do not think that I can be killed that easily.” The words were scrolling around the bottom edge of the ceiling in various colors for everybody to read. After the message to Riddle appeared, all of the black banners in the great hall started to flutter and wave as if a wind was blowing it. The banners reappeared with the crest of their respective houses over each table but every

other banner was completely white. The Hogwarts banner that hung behind the head table changed from black and silver back to its varying colors and rising higher towards the ceiling. All of the floating candles through out the Great Hall started to shine brighter.

The large doors to the Great Hall slammed open against their respective walls and revealed a figure dressed in all black battle robes with their wand out. Nobody knew who it was because they were wearing their hood up which shielded most of its face. The figure walked forward into the Great Hall and made it half way towards the head table standing next to where Ginny, Hermione, and Kayla were sitting when Dumbledore, with a twinkle in his eye, yelled out, "Hold it. Who are you and reveal yourself."

The figure whistled and a blue and white phoenix flew into the Great Hall and landed on its shoulder. At that moment, Hermione, Ron, and Ginny were holding their breath with wide eyes hoping that the phoenix that just landed was Nightlight. The figure lowered its hood and revealed a green eyed, raven haired boy, with a lightning bolt scar on his forehead. It was no other than Harry James Potter.

Smiling mischievously, Harry said while lowering his hood, "In the words of an old enemy, 'Harry Potter has come to Hogwarts.'"

Harry raised his wand and made a simple flick and all the white banners changed to that of banners with the Potter Family Crest on it.

Ginny and Hermione jumped up to hug him as Ron jumped over the table to give Harry a manly one handed hug. Ginny asked with tears in her eyes, "Harry, we thought you were dead. There was a picture that was sent throughout England that showed that you died."

Harry leaned into her with a smile and said, "Pictures can be misleading. That was me but I didn't die yet. Obviously you can see."

Just about three fourths of the school tried to make their way over to Harry to see if it was really him and to welcome him back by shaking his hand which was mainly done by guys or girls who pulled him into a tight hug. Those girls that pulled him into a tight hug received glares from Ginny which Harry did not notice. Hermione, Ron, Neville, Dean,

Seamus, and Ginny were trying to shield Harry from the mob that was forming and escort him to the head table.

The mob was slowly breaking up as the Professors were making their way down from the head table in an effort to restore order in the Great Hall. It took about ten minutes to get everything settled and calm. Dumbledore and Harry made their way to each other and Dumbledore said happily, "I see you've made it back Mr. Potter."

Harry smiled and said, "They're going to need much more than ten Deatheaters to take me down." There was a slight pause and Harry continued on by saying, "I guess you want to know what happened that day."

Dumbledore replied, "You are right, Mr. Potter. I would also like to verify that you are him."

Harry nodded and said, "Would you like to do this in your office or over in that room?" Harry was pointing to the room by the head table where two years ago the school champions were assembled after the selection for the tri-wizard tournament.

Dumbledore said, "I believe my office will do. Will you follow me please?"

It was more of a command than a request but Harry made to follow before he asked, "Professor, can Remus, Tonks, Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville, and Luna come also?"

Dumbledore thought about it for a second and said, "Bring them along if you like."

The group made their way to the Headmaster's office accompanied by McGonagall. When in the office, Harry sat in a chair directly in front of the desk with everybody else sitting in other chairs or sofas or standing somewhere around Harry. Moments later, Professor Snape showed up with a bottle that contained clear liquid in it.

Dumbledore said, "Harry, this is Veritaserum. Will you please drink the entire contents of this bottle?" He handed the bottle over to Harry.

Harry took the bottle and looked at it for a moment, and said, "Sir, I would like this to happen without the presence of Professor Snape."

Snape and Harry glared at each other for a moment but were then interrupted by Dumbledore saying, "Harry, you can trust Professor Snape. I have the utmost confidence in him."

Harry replied, "Professor, you may have that confidence in him but I don't."

Dumbledore took a breath and said, "Alright, will you please leave us Severus."

Snape turned to the Headmaster, nodded, and left the room. After the door was closed, Harry drank the contents of the bottle and the questioning began.

Dumbledore asked, "What is your name?"

Harry said, "Harry James Potter."

"Who were your parents?"

"James and Lily Potter."

"Who was your godfather?"

"Sirius Black."

"Who is your current guardian?"

"Remus Lupin."

Dumbledore nodded his approval and the tension in the room disappeared but was replaced by the anticipation of what happened during the day that Harry supposedly died. It took another five minutes for the potion to wear off and Harry came back to reality with every eye in the room staring at him. He felt a bit self-conscious of

himself with all the eyes on him like that than asked, "Did I pass the test?"

All the girls in the room minus McGonagall gave Harry a hug and all the men gave him a pat on the back with the exception of Remus who took him into a tight hug. Everybody was smiling and than Professor Dumbledore smiling with all the happiness evident in his eyes cleared his throat which caught everybody's attention. He told Harry, "It's good to have you back Harry. Can you tell us what happened two days ago?"

Harry nodded and took a deep breath and said, "This can take awhile. Everybody should sit down for this one."

A/N: Here are the responses to my reviewers from chapter 7.

Socalstephy: Well, I hope that you're happy with this chapter also and I'm setting it up right now for much more interaction between Harry and Ginny with a Hermione and Ron and a Remus and Tonks twist. There's possibly a Luna and Neville coupling but not sure how to work it all yet.

Dancerrdw: Thanks for your reviews. I hope this chapter was just as good for you.

Apatel37: Thank you. I've been working from a rough outline that I've written so far that will last up to Christmas in the Harry Potter time frame. At least, I hope that it will last up to Christmas. Don't worry; I plan on finishing this story.

Whitefish: Thank you for your review. The Dobby and Winky part is going to become important later on in the story. I just really hated Kreatcher so I had to finish him off. If you have recommendations when good days and times to update are please let me know. I think it might be good to update when there's not much updating so there's something new to read on

Everpresent: I realize that Harry is becoming increasingly powerful but don't worry. I don't plan on making it easy for him. At least when the story continues after Christmas in the story. The three phoenixes

do make it harder to believe but that will play an important role later on.

Chapter 9

The Night After the Arrival

Harry stood up and walked over to a window and stared out onto the open ground. He waited as everybody was getting comfortable in their seat. He sighed, turned around and said, "Two days ago, around eight in the morning, I decided to go and take a walk. My daily routine had been disrupted so much over the past few days that I decided to take a break from training until I get settled in school. I was having a nice stroll in a forest that I'm not too sure of where the forest is but just ended up there."

Remus said, "Harry, it's not safe for you to be wandering around like that. Next time, will you please take more precautions?"

Harry nodded and continued on with his story, "After wandering in the woods, I decided to head into Hogsmeade to see what there was to buy or just go window shopping. I ended up on a side street where the Hogs Head is located. I'm not sure why but curiosity got the better of me who was in there and I went in. I ordered a butterbeer and sat in the corner just thinking about the start of the new school year like what trouble I'm going to end up getting into, what adventure will take place this year, who the new defense teacher will be, you know stuff like that."

Hermione interrupted Harry and said, "Harry, you know, the new defense teachers are Remus and Tonks."

Harry's face lit up and said, "Congratulations Professors."

Remus and Tonks both said, "Thank you," at the same time.

Remus continued on by saying, "Harry, you better not go on any more adventures as all of your years here so far. I have a feeling that this year is probably going to be like your fourth year with the Triwizard tournament."

Harry was confused for a second and than Ron filled him in about the challenge from Durmstrang. After being told the challenge from Durmstrang, Harry couldn't but help feel a little down because it

brought back memories of Cedric being killed at the end of the tournament.

Dumbledore interrupted Harry's train of thought about Cedric and said, "Harry can you continue with your story please?"

Harry said, "Oh, Sorry about that Professor. Well, the place was pretty quiet and I got bored fairly quickly so I left the Hogshead but what I didn't realize was that somebody was following me. Apparently, I didn't remember to wear my hood to cover my face and a few people recognized me. I must have been walking around for about half an hour before I noticed that somebody was following me. So I turned and headed away from the village trying to get away from whoever was following me just in case it was about to turn nasty. And boy did it turn out to be nasty."

Everybody in the room except for Harry was filled with anticipation for the rest of the story. Harry sighed and continued on, "I made my way near the Shrieking Shack and at that point there were a series of popping noises. I turned around and there were seven Deatheaters with their wands drawn at me."

There were gasps from Hermione and Ginny when he mentioned the Deatheaters. Harry looked at both of them for a second and continued with his story. He took a deep breath and said, "All of the Deatheaters fired spells right at me which helped me out because I was able to dodge the spells by dropping and rolling towards my left." Harry just stopped his story and thought, 'It's not going to do any good to tell them what happened. It would be better if they could see the fight.'

Harry turned to Dumbledore and asked, "Professor, can I borrow your pensieve so I can show everybody exactly what happened?"

Dumbledore said, "That would probably be a better idea." He got up and went to a cabinet along his back wall and pulled out his pensieve. Dumbledore brought it over to his table and asked, "Harry, do you know how to use this?"

Harry said, "I'm not sure, can you show me how?"

"Concentrate on that moment in time, point your wand to the temple, and think of the word 'extract.' Then pull your wand away slowly and deposit the material that it pulls out into the pensive."

Harry did as the professor just instructed. After he completed it he said, "If anybody wants to see the fight scene than come and see it."

Dumbledore said, "There's a better way to do this." He tapped the side of the pensive with his wand and the Harry's memory appeared over the pensive like it was a holographic image. Everybody gathered around to see the memory that Harry just pulled out of his mind.

Harry rolled on the ground away from the Deatheaters and when he came out of his roll, Harry had drawn his holly wand in his right hand. Harry yelled, "Reducto!" The spell hit the ground just in front of the middle Deatheater. Three of the Deatheaters went flying in the air while the other four started firing stunning and bludging spells at a rapid rate. After Harry's reducto spell, all he could do was cast shield charms after shield charms to protect himself from the onslaught of spells. While casting his shielding spell, Harry made his way behind a tree that was quickly destroyed by a reducto spell and splinters from the tree made its way all over Harry's body.

Harry was wobbling on his feet as he could barely stand from all the wood fragments that pierced his body from his upper chest to his upper thigh. Blood started to spill from all of the wounds. At seeing that, Ginny and Hermione went to hug the real Harry. Harry said, "It looks worse than it felt. I knew that I was hurt but it wasn't as painful even though I was losing control over my body."

Over the hologram of what was happening, Harry had just collapsed onto the ground. The Deatheaters were excited as more of their friends showed up to join the celebration. A Deatheater walked over to the group and said, "I have an idea. McNair, Nott, hold up Potter's body and let's let the entire wizarding world know that their boy hero is now dead. The Deatheater that was talking disappeared and reappeared instantly with a camera in his hands. He took a picture while the other Deatheaters were celebrating. After taking the picture, the Deatheater disappeared while the others continued to celebrate.

They threw Harry's body back onto the ground and continued to jump up and down, drinking firewhiskey and spitting and throwing things on Harry's body.

Hermione, Ginny, and Tonks were crying. Tonks was being held by Remus. Hermione was being held by Ron who was filled with anger at what he was seeing. Luna lost her lost airy look and looked determined as she continue to stare at the image over the pensive. Ginny was being held by Harry. Dumbledore, McGonagall, Neville, and Remus were all sharing in Ron's anger as all of them had their hands clenched in a fist. Harry whispered to Ginny, "It's all fine. See I'm here. You know how everything turned out."

Ginny only nodded her agreement as she was leaning on Harry as she dried her tears on Harry's robes. Everybody slowly turned there attention back to the pensive as Harry said, "I did not realize that they were doing that while I was out."

Dumbledore said, "Your conscious self may not have realized it but your unconscious side was recording everything that was happening."

There was a pop and a Deatheater reappeared and said, "The Dark Lord is arriving."

At that moment, Nightlight appeared in a ball of flames over Harry's body and took a hold of him with her claws. In the next instant, there was another burst of blue flames and Harry and Nightlight were gone. Harry realizing what might happen next so he hurried over to the pensive and tapped it with his wand hoping that that will end the memory.

Remus asked, "Harry, why did you end the memory?"

Harry said, "If Nightlight took me where I thought she did than you can't know about that place yet."

Ginny, Ron, and Hermione saw their opportunity to find out where Harry was hiding when Harry finished his statement. There eyes went wide as they rushed towards the pensive but were held off by Remus

and Dumbledore. Dumbledore said, “We must respect Harry’s wishes for us not to see his memory.”

With that, the Headmaster turned around and with a flick of his wand the silvery substance of Harry’s memory floated in the air and went back into Harry’s head. He asked, “Have you fully recovered yet?”

Harry said, “I am about 80 percent better. I still feel a bit of pain here and there but the wounds are all healed. I guess you might have noticed that Dobby and Winky left Grimmauld Place yesterday.”

Dumbledore said, “I thought it was awkward that Dobby and Winky took off in such a hurry while they were setting the table.”

“They told me that they were in the middle of setting the table. Well, I summoned them to help me heal myself yesterday. I was recovering fairly nicely and wanted to also tell them to be careful and keep an eye out for anything that may be suspicious.”

“Harry, I would like for you to go visit Madame Pomfrey to make sure everything is fine.”

“It’s alright Professor. There’s no need. I feel much better, but if I do feel like it’s getting worse than I’ll go to her.”

“Alright Harry, but it is getting late now. Harry, you along with your friends go on back to Gryffindor Tower.” Dumbledore lowered his voice and leaned towards Harry and said, “Your suite is also ready. It’s behind the first portrait on your left as you enter the Common Room. The password is ‘Fire Flight.’”

Tonks and Remus escorted the Gryffindors back to their tower after the group escorted Luna to Ravenclaw Tower first. The Gryffindors bid Tonks and Remus good night as they left the two professors and went into the Gryffindor Common Room.

It was late and the Common Room was empty. Harry told them, “I’m tired. I’ll see you all tomorrow morning.”

Ron asked, "Where do you think you're going? The dorms are up the stairs." Neville, Hermione, and Ginny were also sharing in Ron's confusion.

Harry said, "Oh, I guess I forgot to tell you all that I'm going to be getting my own room. Or should I say suite for this year."

Hermione asked, "Why are you getting your own room?"

Harry replied, "Well, there's a special circumstance why I require my own room and one of which is my training regiment now. Dumbledore knows about it. Plus it gives me some time alone when I need it."

Harry said the password and the portrait opened up. They walked into a smaller common room that had a fire place with three sofas facing it. There was a small coffee table in the middle of the sofa. On the other side of the room there was a mini kitchen that had a table with six chairs around it probably for studying and eating because along the wall behind the table, there was a wall length counter. Below the counter there were several cabinets charmed to be cool which had various foods like fruits and vegetables. It also contained drinks in it like pumpkin juice and butterbeer. Above the counter there were cabinets filled with sweets and dry goods.

Ron, Neville, Hermione, and Ginny followed Harry into his new suite. There were two doors along the wall directly across from the wall that contained the portrait that they just entered through. They walked through the door on the right and entered a bedroom. It was a large and spacious bedroom with another door on its right wall. In the middle of the room on an elevated platform is a large four poster bed with Gold cloth covering around the bed except for two sides where it is parted to get on the bed. The bed sheets were red luxurious sheets. There was a desk along the opposite wall of the door that they just entered. On both sides of the desk there were large floor to ceiling windows that allowed for lots of external light to enter the room. Harry's new trunk arrived and is at the foot of Harry's bed. The room was finely decorated in Gold and Red Gryffindor colors.

The group entered the side door in the bedroom and entered a bathroom. The bathroom had a large wall length and waist to ceiling

tall mirror. The bathroom is different shades of pastel blue and white. There was both a multi-head shower that shot water on the body from all different angles and a large bathtub that could easily fit four people that had several nozzles to turn the bathtub into a Jacuzzi if wanted.

They left the bedroom and went back to the Head's common room and went through the door next to the one that led to Harry's bedroom to a room that was bare except for padded walls. It was decorated in all different solid colors with lots of windows for external light. There was a side door that led into another bathroom that was similar to the one in Harry's bedroom.

They walked back to the Head common room and Harry said, "This is really nice."

Ron said, "Yeah mate. I wished I could stay in here with you."

Ginny said, "Harry, you're lucky. Did you see that bed? If I were to get a bed like that, I don't know if I would even bother waking up in the morning."

Harry smiled and thought, 'How could I forget. I already have my own practice room in my trunk. Hmm, I wonder if they would want to stay here with me.' Harry than said, "Would you all want to stay here? The girls could take one room and Neville and Ron can share my room."

Ginny jumped up at that prospect and said, "I would love it."

Hermione said, "I don't know if McGonagall will like that very much."

Harry said, "We can always just switch back to the way they are now if she says anything, it's not going to harm anybody." At that moment, Harry noticed three individual portraits along the wall farthest wall with no door opposite that of the mini kitchen. One of them had Helga Hufflepuff, one had Rowena Ravenclaw, and the last one had Salazar Slytherin.

Hermione saw what Harry was staring at and said, "The head suite all have portraits that allow the head boy or head girl to enter each of the common rooms just in case they need to. In order to enter that house

you need their main password to enter and to return to this room, they need your password.”

Harry thought about it and said, “I wonder if Luna would want to stay here also.”

Ginny said, “I’ll ask her tomorrow.”

Harry said, “Alright than, why don’t you all go get your things and I’ll set these rooms up.” Everybody left except for Harry who went to each room and conjured a bed and a desk for each person. Harry floated his bed off to the side of the room so now each room has three beds similar to that of Harry’s and a desk next to it. Even after all the conjuring that Harry made, the two bedrooms were still nicely spacious. He also added a large mirror to each room.

Harry was just finished with the girls’ room when everybody arrived with their trunks levitated behind them. Harry helped them unpacked there things and get settled in their rooms. After he was done, they were sitting around the fire in their new common room.

Hermione asked, “Harry, there was a reason why Dumbledore gave you these private rooms. Wouldn’t this interfere with whatever you’re supposed to be doing?”

Harry responded, “Hermione, the original reason why I received these rooms is because of my training. The room that you are in now was supposed to be my training room, that’s why it was padded and there were no furniture.”

“But how are you going to train now?”

“I wanted to keep it a secret but I guess I should tell you. Well, my trunk isn’t just any ordinary trunk. It is one of those compartmentalized trunks and one of the compartments that I’ve set up is a training room.”

Ron jumped up and said, “I want to see your trunk.”

The group got up and followed Ron over to Harry's trunk and opened up the top of his trunk. There was a ladder that leads down to the trunks sitting room. The sitting room had four sofas facing each other at the center of the room. The room was in different shades of blue. Along one wall there were two doors that led to two identical bedrooms with attaching bathrooms. The bedrooms were roomy with a single bed and a dresser. One bedroom was all white while the other bedroom was in different shades of red. The bathrooms were simple with just the essentials in there and were the same colors as their respective bedrooms.

The wall to the right of the bedrooms led to a large library. The library had different pastel colors running along the walls and ceiling. The library was filled with books and had two four person tables in the middle of the room. There were about ten aisles of books on each side of the room that were perpendicular to the study tables at the center of the room. Along the opposite wall there were two large sofas facing each other with a simple coffee table between them. Running parallel to these sofas were an additional five aisles of books on each sides. The library was divided into muggle and magical and then divided further. Each aisle that ran parallel to the sofa was dedicated to the muggle world. The aisles were subdivided into sociology, philosophy, history, chemistry, physics, technology, foreign languages, geography, and fiction. The aisles perpendicular to the two study tables were dedicated to the magical world. These were divided into Charms, Transfiguration, Arithmancy, Geography of the Magical World, Potions, Magical History, and one fourth of the magical section of the library was dedicated to Defense Against the Dark Arts.

Hermione wanted to run around the library and look at the various books but the rest of them managed to pull her out back to the sitting room. They walked towards the wall with the ladder that they entered the trunk through which had two doors on either side of the ladder. The door to the right led to a potions lab. The potions lab was lined on two walls with potions ingredients in circular reagent bottles lined next to each other three rows along the wall above a counter. The wall between the two walls with potions ingredients contained shelves reagent bottles stocked with potions that are already made. The larger bottles were below the counter while above the bottle they

were in smaller bottles for single doses set to roll down when the bottom bottle is taken out so it can be easily retrieved. In the center are four empty table tops to make potions on and below the tables are different equipments and stocking bottles to make potions. The table tops and counter tops were all black while everything else was white.

They left the potions lab and walked to the door on the other side of the ladder which led to the training room. The training room had a brown bottom and peach colored walls and a white ceiling. The training room was padded along the walls and had various muggle weapons lining its walls from broad swords to staffs to bows and arrows to sais.

The last room they went into was opposite the library and Ron's eyes lit up when they walked into it. It was a Kitchen decorated in shades of silver and white. The kitchen had a long wooden table running down the center of the room and was perpendicular to the door. The table could easily seat ten people. On the left and right wall there was a long running counter top with a large refrigerator that appeared to be only for looks at the end of the far side from the door. The refrigerators were charmed to either cool or freeze its contents. These two sides of the room mirrored each other and had a stove with oven at the center of the counter. The left side of the room was dedicated to things from the muggle world while the right side of the room was dedicated to things from the magical world.

After looking around and each person grabbing a butterbeer, they all climbed out of the trunk and exited the boys' room. They all sat back in their personal common room. Ginny said, "That's absolutely incredible. Harry, your trunk was amazing. When did you get it and did you design it?"

Harry blushed at the compliment and said, "Thanks. I got it the day during the second attack on Diagon Alley. I was finished shopping that morning and I did have some assistance in the design of the trunks from the sales lady at the shop."

Neville said, "It's two in the morning. I think we should go to bed."

Hermione yawned and said, "I didn't realize it was that late. We should go to bed. We have classes in a little while."

Everybody agreed with this and headed off to their respective rooms. Before Harry could clear his head, he heard Ron fall asleep and snoring almost immediately. Harry cleared his head and fell into a dreamless sleep almost as quickly also.

A/N: Here are the responses to my reviewers since my last chapter post.

Nightwing 509: Thank you. I hope that you liked this chapter also.

Ima Quidditch Fan: I agree with you that Ginny is a strong witch that will make a great match for Harry as his equal. I'm still laying the foundation for the story but it will show up later.

Bobboky: Thank you. I hope that you continue to like the imagery that is used.

Dancerrdw: Thank you, I'll try to keep up the update rate but currently dealing with a few computer problems again but will try to get the next one up by the end of the week.

Whitefish: Thank you. I guess there really are no recommendations on when to update so I'm not sure when to try to get the updates in but it seems like is a bit flaky lately because they seem to be down a lot.

Alyssia: Thank you. Don't worry there will be more Remus and Tonks later on but I want to get the character introductions set first.

Firebirdgs: Thank you for your compliment. I will try to answer your questions but be warned first that this reveal bits of the story so if you don't want to know yet than skip the response to firebirdgs. Harry and Ginny already do but won't tell each other but Ginny will be the one to push it first in a few chapters just before Christmas. Ron and Hermione will be thrown together by way of threat in about 3 or 4 chapters. Remus and Tonks are technically already together and will have a flashback that will explain their story in about 2 or 3 chapters. I

do plan on using humor at least until Christmas but if you have recommendations on what to do than I'm open to suggestions because I can't think of a really good prank. I don't plan on using Peeves but haven't really given that much thought yet though. Christmas is the key to the timeline in this story because all hell will break loose afterwards because right now the foundation is still being set for what will happen later on. Well there will be one more all-purpose item later on but it won't be powerful. This will be revealed when the DA is formed and the item is just a more advanced form of the DA coin. This is more of a practical item than an accessory to counteract the knowledge of the DA coins by the rest of the school at this point and be able to remain as discreet as possible. There will be more internal struggle in the story but bits of it will be laid down before Christmas but after Christmas the struggles might just overwhelm Harry and that's where his friends and in particular Ginny will be playing a vital role to the story. I try not to read too many fics at this time because I tend to lose my train of thought on where my story is heading right now and not to mention I start to forget the contents of this story which I've reread my story several times already just so I can remember things. Last but not least, my recommendation to you is that if you have an idea and want to put it in writing than you should do so and don't degrade yourself. If you want, I will be more than happy to assist you in your story like give recommendations and be your beta reader. Again, thank you for your comments and suggestions.

Kaleena Mason: Thank you. I hope that you liked what I did to the trunk. The trunk will play a role in the training to prep Harry and the team and here's a hint, the library will be important to a certain aspect of the story later on.

roke through the protection shield around the field and charged one of their dormitories and destroyed it. Needless to say they were not very pleased so all of their students decided to get involved in the fight. In the end it was a field of massacre with stunned and broken bodies everywhere. At least nobody died and no permanent damage. My team was suspended for a week for that day.”

“That seems like you all got off easy.”

“Oh we did, it’s just that our Headmaster hated that school that we destroyed so much that he only did that for show. During the suspension, my friends and I decided to take a little vacation so we ended up coming to England to play. We were out in muggle London playing when we just happen to stumble upon some wizards and witches talking about the tri-wizard tournament at Hogwarts. So we followed them and they led us to Diagon Alley and we managed to get some information from different people on how to get to Hogwarts.”

“How did that happen? I’m surprised that nobody said anything about you all for being so you and not in school.”

“Oh a few people did notice but we were able to convince them that we were here with our parents on vacation and it was not hard to convince considering we don’t have English accents.”

“How did you get to Hogwarts?”

“Well, we found out about the Hogwarts express and took the train to Hogsmeade. When we arrived at Hogsmeade we made our way to Hogwarts and snuck in with the entourage for the English Ministry Officials who came to watch the tournament. It took some convincing and exchanging of money but we were able to get them to let us accompany them to the tournament.”

“Which event did you all get to see?”

“Oh we got to see the one with the dragons. I believe it was the first task. The Headmaster from Durmstrang was so unfair with that score he gave you. But you were absolutely incredible. I don’t think I’ve

seen anybody fly a broom any better and needless to say coming up with that strategy for that task while everybody else was running around on the ground.”

Harry blushed at the compliment and said, “I’m not sure if you know it or not but everybody cheated throughout the tournament. I did not mean to cheat but the information was pretty much thrown at me because I was dragged out to see the dragons before anybody knew about it.”

“We kind of figured that. We heard that there were lots of cheating from everybody in these tournaments but as long as everybody had the information, I guess it doesn’t really matter.”

“What did you all do after the task was over?”

“We hung out in Hogsmeade for a day than back in London for another few days and headed back to school. You know after I saw you that day, I wanted to meet you. All of my friends seem to have a crush on you ever since they saw you that day.”

Harry sighed.

Kayla noticed the sigh and said, “Well, don’t get them wrong, they knew about you before coming to England. They started to like you because of how you survived the first task. At least they didn’t just like you because of your fame.”

“I guess that is better than most out there.”

Kayla nodded and asked, “Well, we didn’t get to hear too much about how everything turned out except for bits and pieces from the newspaper. Can you tell me what happened from your prospective?”

Harry told her about the three task and an edited version of what happened at the graveyard. At the end of Harry’s story, she said, “That’s so awful.”

They were quiet for half a minute than Harry said, “Well, lets talk about something less depressing.”

Kayla nodded and asked, "Well, how about the Hogwarts All-star team?"

Clearly confused, Harry asked, "The what?"

"That's right. You didn't arrive yet when the announcement was made. Well, there was a challenge issued by Durmstrang to Hogwarts. An All-star team will be assembled which will be composed of ten people to compete in three fields, academics, quidditch, and dueling."

"That should be pretty interesting. Are you going to sign up for it?"

"I signed up last night. There are lots of people that are going to try to be on the team but from what I heard, there's not a single Slytherin that's going to sign up because they don't want to associate with the other houses."

"I would have guessed that they would've had more school pride."

"Rumor has it that there are a few that want to but don't want to be alienated in their houses. There really isn't much that we can do about it. It's their choice after all to be a leader or a follower. Are you going to sign up for it?"

"I'm assuming that the school already expects me to sign up. Don't get me wrong, I want to be on the team but I also want to show Voldemort what I can do, at least not yet."

"You can always join and not play at your full potential."

"True, but it wouldn't be fair to anybody that would be on the team and working with all of their heart for their school and team."

"You don't have to perform in every event. You can just play quidditch and not in the dueling competition so nobody will know what you can do."

"That is a good point. If that is the case though, I can just play quidditch for the house team."

"From what I heard, quidditch has been canceled for this year so all the focus will be given to Durmstrang."

"Another year without quidditch, it's about the only thing that gives me joy and a sense of freedom. Well, I'll sign up too I guess. If anything from what you told me earlier, you'll be more than ready for the dueling competition."

Kayla smiled and said, "That means a lot coming from you. Who knows what else that I'll be able to do with your help along the way."

Harry nodded and said, "Well, I'll make up my decision by dinner. I think that lunch just started."

The two of them headed back inside to the Great Hall.

A/N: Here are the responses to the reviewers since my last posting.

Haydenrocks14: Thank you for the review and hope you continue to enjoy the story.

Firebirdgs: Thank you for your review and recommendations. I'll respond to yours as for your request by e-mail.

babyHarry: Thank you for your review and hope you continue to enjoy the story.

Dancerrdw: Thank you for your review.

Lil island girl: Thank you for the correction to my error in the story. I totally forgot all about how the mirror ended up in the trunk. If you see others than please let me know.

Ima Quidditch Fan: Thank you for reviewing and hope you enjoyed this chapter also. I always try to include as much imagery as possible so hopefully everybody can feel like they're standing there also.

Nightwing 509: Thank you for your review. I hope you continue to enjoy the story.

Chapter 11

The All-Stars Arrive

There was lots of chatter about who would try out for the team. As Harry and Kayla were walking to the Gryffindor table, they spotted Ginny and Luna were already there so they decided to join the two fifth year girls. Harry and Kayla were sitting across from Ginny and Luna when they were joined by Ron, Hermione, and Neville almost right away.

Harry asked, "How were your classes so far?"

Luna was reading her upside down copy of the Quibbler and pulling in the occasional fruit to take a bite out of them while sounding frustrated, Ginny said, "I don't know if I'll be able to survive this year. All of the teachers are already starting to pile on the work and it's just the first day. Can you believe that Snape wanted four feet of parchment on the uses of orchids on headache relief potions?"

Harry said, "It'll be alright. Remember, you have Hermione and me to help you if you ever need it."

Ginny's eyes lit up and said, "Thanks Harry. I'll probably take you up on that offer."

Kayla said, "I can help you also if you want."

Ginny turned to Kayla and with less excitement said, "Thank you."

Kayla turned to Harry and asked, "Harry did you want some roast beef sandwiches. There are plenty over here." She handed some to Harry while she was asking and this rubbed Ginny the wrong way as she glared at the girl but nobody seemed to notice.

After everybody managed to get a little to eat, Hermione asked, "Harry, how did you do all that charms work that you did last night? It was really good but you didn't know anywhere as much at the end of last year."

Harry said, "I was practicing."

Ron said, "You're not going to tell us are you."

Harry replied, "Not right now. I will tell you soon though but for now it's my secret."

Hermione and Ron frowned at his response. Hermione than asked, "Since you're not going to tell us when and how you learned these spells, can you teach us?"

Harry said, "Sure, that's not a problem. I'll have to find some time though, because I already have some private lessons with Kayla right now and plus I want to help Ginny prepare for her O.W.L.s."

Ginny was thinking, 'Is Kayla trying to work her way in with Harry? I wonder what it is that they're working on. At least I'll have him for part of the time alone to work on my O.W.L.s. You can't really count it as a date but I'll take whatever I can from Harry.' She ended up asking, "What is it that you're working on with Kayla?"

Harry said, "We're exchanging some talents that's all. It's up to Kayla if she wants to help you in what she's doing for me but I have no problem if you want to join us when I'm doing the teaching but I think that everybody here has class at that time."

Hermione and Ginny frowned while Ron was relieved that he didn't have to work too much harder than all that he had to do so far but wanted to be there for what Harry had to teach though. Luna seemed oblivious to the conversation but Neville who was listening asked, "Kayla, if you don't mind. Can you tell us what it is that you're helping Harry with?"

Kayla thought, 'I don't want too many people to know about this yet. I'm not sure why but I feel that I can trust Harry. I just don't know about the rest of them. For now, I'll just only help Harry and when I get to know the rest of them better than I'll help them also.' She said, "I just want to try something with Harry first. If it works out than I'll help everybody else out but I would prefer not to say what it is that I'm working on right now."

Hermione sighed and thought, ‘Looks like she’s trying to play some kind of game. Well, I’m not sure that we can trust her yet. I need to keep an eye on this girl but until than we’ll just have to work on Harry for now on the details of what he’s working on.’ Hermione ended up saying, “Alright, but when the time comes please let us know.”

Kayla nodded and was about to say something when Harry interrupted by saying, “It’s almost time for class. We should get going.”

Hermione checked her watch and notice that they had ten minutes to make it to the transfiguration class. The sixth year Gryffindors got up and headed off to transfiguration while the fifth years headed off to astronomy. Harry and his friends arrived just five minutes before classes started and took there seats near the front of the class. The bell rang for the start of class and the students sat down in their seats which were paired off.

McGonagall entered the class through the main entrance into her class and said, “Good afternoon class and welcome to N.E.W.T. level transfiguration. In order to have gotten in this class you needed to achieve at least an ‘E’ on your O.W.L.s. This class will be moving at a fast pace and it will be easy to fall behind in this class. Please keep up and if you have trouble come see me after class or at my office. Are there any questions?”

Nobody raised there hand and she continued on by saying, “Today we’re going to start with a review of everything that we’ve worked on over the last five years. By the end of this semester everybody should be able to transfigure complicated furniture designs. Alright, a general idea of what we will be covering is listed on the board. If there are no questions than let us begin.”

Once again, nobody raised their hand and started their two hour class session on a quick review of everything they should be able to complete already. To many people’s surprise, Neville had little difficulty with the spells that he had difficulty working over the past years and was up to the standards of the rest of the class. At the end of class, McGonagall told Harry to stay back. His friends waited for him outside of the door to walk to Hagrid’s class.

McGonagall said, "Mr. Potter, are you aware of the Durmstrang challenge that was announced yesterday at the feast before you arrived?"

Harry sighed and said, "Yes Ma'am."

"I'm not for beating around the bush so I'll ask you. Are you going to sign up to be on this team?"

"Professor, I want to be on this team to represent Hogwarts and Gryffindor but I feel that I should keep secret about some of my abilities and this challenge will bring out some of my abilities. If I were to be selected to be on the team, I believe that the only thing I'll be able to participate in would be the quidditch team."

McGonagall thought about it for a minute and nodded. She said, "I understand Mr. Potter. If you were to make the team than it would be ultimately up to you and the team on what each member of the team will be doing. Plus, there is the possibility that you won't be making it on the team."

Harry nodded and said, "I guess this will have to be solved if the problem arises. I would like to submit my name to be on the team."

McGonagall still kept her stern face and said, "I expected nothing less from you but it was your decision to make. I'll submit your name and you better get going to your next class."

Harry met up with his friends who were waiting by the door and the group made their way down to Hagrid's hut for class. On the way down, Harry filled the rest of the group on the conversation with McGonagall. Upon making it to Hagrid's hut, they were surprised to find that it was mostly Gryffindors and the only non-Gryffindors were the ones in the DA.

Harry walked up to Hagrid and asked, "How are you Hagrid?"

Hagrid turned around and with a large smile on his face, said, "Just fine 'arry. 'Ow are you all doing?"

Everybody offered there hellos and Kayla was introduced to Hagrid and the two started talking about what she had already learned which interested Hagrid to no end. The bell for the start of class chimed and Hagrid went to the front of the class and started his lesson.

Hagrid said, "Today's lesson will be on this creature," he pulled away a large tarp to reveal a winged beast with the body of a lion. He asked, "Who can tell me what this is?"

Hermione's hand went flying and Hagrid called out, "ermione?"

Hermione answered, "A griffin."

Hagrid replied, "That's correct and five points to Gryffindor. Now can anybody tell me what a griffin is?"

This time Hagrid called out to Kayla and she answered, "It is a magical beast with the ability to fly. Griffin's are incredibly strong and loyal. Just like the phoenix they are loyal only to those of good hearts."

Hagrid said, "That's also correct. Ten points to Gryffindor."

The class continued on as Hagrid had each student go up and pet the griffin and lectured on other properties of a griffin. At the end of class they bid Hagrid bye and headed back to the dormitories with the exception of Hermione and Kayla who went to runes class.

The group met up with one another again at dinner in the Great Hall. The Hall changed this time as there was a pedestal with the Hogwarts banner draped over it sitting in front of the Head Table. The pedestal had what looked like a small oak tree on it that had a shiny brown trunk with branches and leaves of three different shiny colors which were, blue, purple, and red. Near the end of dinner, Dumbledore stood up before the school to the side of the pedestal and said, "Good evening. As you all know tonight we will be selecting our Hogwarts All-star team to represent us against that of Durmstrang. This tree here will be selecting the team randomly as its leaves shed. The colors of the leaves are representative of the house that the

student belongs to. Blue is for Hufflepuff, Purple is for Ravenclaw, Red is for Gryffindor, as there are no Slytherin, there are no green leaves."

Dumbledore tapped the tree once with his wand and a blue leaf fell from the tree. Dumbledore picked up the leaf and said, "When I call your name, please come forward and stand on the other side of this tree. The first person is Susan Bones of Hufflepuff." There were clapping from all four houses with the occasional clap coming from Slytherin and a standing ovation coming from Hufflepuff who were congratulating her. She made her way up to the front on the opposite side of the tree and waited for the next name to be called.

Dumbledore tapped the tree again and a red leaf fell from the tree. He picked it up and called out, "Hermione Granger of Gryffindor." Hermione modestly stood up to the hollering and cheering of her house mates and to the glares from most of Slytherin. She made her way up and after shaking Susan's hand, while the two congratulated each other, took her place next to her.

With the next tap on the top of the tree, a purple leaf fell from the tree. Dumbledore took the leaf and said, "Terry Boot of Ravenclaw." Terry stood up with a jump and excitedly made his way to the front and took his place next to Hermione after greeting Hermione and Susan.

As the cheering from Ravenclaw calmed, the next leaf fell from the tree. Dumbledore picked up the red leaf and called out, "Ginerva Weasley of Gryffindor." As Ginny stood up there were lots of hollering and cheering from both the Gryffindor and Ravenclaw table. Harry congratulated her and she blushed as she made her way up to the front where she was congratulated by Susan, Hermione, and Terry.

After Ginny took her spot next to Terry, another leaf fell from the tree after Dumbledore tapped the tree. He picked up the purple leaf and called out, "Luna Lovegood of Ravenclaw." With the airy expression still on her face, Luna lowered her copy of the Quibbler, and made her way to the front to stand next to Ginny. The crowd wasn't cheering as loudly as they were for the rest of the team so far but the loudest cheering could be heard from her friends from Gryffindor.

To the surprise of most of the people who were keeping count. Another red leaf fell off of the tree and Dumbledore picked it up to call out, "Ronald Weasley of Gryffindor." Ron jumped up from his seat to the cheering of the Gryffindor version of Weasley is our King. Ron took his place next to Luna after congratulating Susan, Hermione once again, Terry, Ginny with a hug, and Luna.

After the Gryffindor finished singing Weasley is our King, Dumbledore gave the tree a tap once again. He picked up the blue leaf and read, "Ernie MacMillan of Hufflepuff." The Hufflepuff table erupted once again just like before for Susan when her name was called. Ernie made his way to stand on the other side of Ron after they shook each others hand.

The Hufflepuffs quieted down when Dumbledore raised his hands up. After tapping the tree again, a red leaf fell from the tree and Dumbledore called out, "Kayla Rapp of Gryffindor." There were cheering from Gryffindor but it was out of loyalty to the house because most of the students didn't know much about her other than Harry. There were also some whispering of she shouldn't be allowed because she was just a transfer student and not really a Hogwarts student. Harry stood up and cheered for her while she blushed and hugged Harry before making her way to the front where she shook everybody's hands.

Dumbledore tapped the tree once again and another leaf fell from the tree. He picked up the purple leaf and read out, "Michael Coroner of Ravenclaw." There was loud cheering from the Ravenclaw table. Michael made his way up to the front and shook everybody's hand although it was a bit hesitant between Michael and Ginny due to their break up at the end of last year.

Dumbledore raised his hand to calm the entire hall down. The Great Hall was filled with looks of anticipation of those that wondered who was going to be the last person to be on the team. There were also expressions of hope of those that still had there names left on the tree that they will be picked next. As always, there were the Slytherins who tried to look like they didn't really care but it was evident in the way they were staring at the tree. With the last tap on the tree a final red leaf fell.

Dumbledore picked up the leaf and his eyes started to shine incredibly bright as the twinkle in his eyes grew. He read out, "Harry Potter of Gryffindor." Right when the words Harry left Dumbledore's lips, the hall erupted in cheers with Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Gryffindor standing and cheering while the Slytherin were shouting insults. Harry briefly closed his eyes and took a deep breath as he opened them up again to the scene of everybody patting him on the back and congratulating him.

He stood up and made his way to the front where he was congratulated by Dumbledore and saw Hagrid cheering with all his heart and McGonagall clapping with the hint of excitement in her stern expression. Harry shook the hands of his new teammates and exchanged congratulations with one another.

Harry took his place next to Michael and Dumbledore raised his hand to call for the hall to calm down. Dumbledore said, "I would like to thank Miss Bones, Miss Granger, Mr. Boot, Miss Weasley, Miss Lovegood, Mr. Weasley, Mr. MacMillan, Miss Rapp, Mr. Coroner, and Mr. Potter for volunteering for the team. Will you all please follow me back to my office?"

Led by Professor Dumbledore, the newly assembled team made their way back to the Headmaster's office. They took seats around Dumbledore's desk as he took his seat behind his desk. Dumbledore asked, "Lemon drop?"

Everybody declined. He then continued on by saying, "I wanted to thank you all again for volunteering for representing Hogwarts. As you probably heard already from the rumors running around campus that quidditch has been canceled for this year so we can focus our attention on this competition. First off, as you all are familiar with the three different competitions, are there any reservations from anybody on the team?"

It was silent for awhile before Harry said, "I do professor." Everybody in the room looked at him fairly surprised except for Kayla and Dumbledore. He continued on by saying, "I'm pretty sure that everybody here is familiar with my unique relationship with

Voldemort." There were some flinching by most of the people in the room except for Hermione, Dumbledore, and Kayla. After the flinching ended, Harry said, "I had my reservations with entering this team until I talked to Kayla and Professor McGonagall. I believe that if I were to stay on the team, than about the only thing that I'll be able to do would be the quidditch competition."

Dumbledore asked, "Are there any problems from the rest of the team?"

Coroner said, "If he can't possibly play and is that self conscious about You-Know-Who than maybe he shouldn't be on the team."

Once he finished the statement, he was faced with heavy opposition from the rest of the team. They were all yelling at him especially the Gryffindors. During the heated exchange Harry walked over to a window that over looked the lake and the oak tree that he rested under earlier in the day. Harry didn't feel like joining in the fight and just waited until it died down. Dumbledore called for order and everybody quieted down quickly.

Dumbledore said, "It may be possible that if Mr. Potter does not participate in the other two events than it won't hurt the team. The academics and dueling competition will have five people each so let's see who would compete if Mr. Potter did not."

Hermione said, "Well, who would be good for the first competition?"

While staring out the window, Harry said, "I believe that Hermione, Kayla, Ginny, Luna, Michael would be good for the team with Susan preparing with them just in case one of them don't feel up to it the day of test. Of course, the rest of us will be helping them prepare for it."

Everybody was surprised by the ease that Harry mentioned the names and including Michael while he just tried to kick him off the team. Harry continued on by saying, "From what I can tell, all of them have pretty sharp minds and even if Ginny and Luna are a year behind, I don't believe that they will have problems catching up because they're already incredibly smart as it is."

Ginny blushed at the comment and even Luna seemed to show a little surprise in her usual airy expression. Hermione than said, "I believe that that could probably work especially with the rest of the team helping, everybody should be in a pretty good position by the time it is for us to compete."

Dumbledore said, "Alright, since that is settled. Who will be on the dueling team?"

Still staring out the window, Harry said, "The dueling team should be filled with varying talents like that of a quidditch team. I think it would be a good team with Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Kayla, and Terry. Susan and Luna would be very good alternates for this team." He sighed and said, "I know it sounds a little lopsided with it being filled with so my Gryffindors but from what I saw they were incredibly good not to say that the rest are not good."

Michael asked, "Kayla just transferred here. How can you say that she's better than any of us?"

Harry said, "I'm guessing that I know a little more about her than the rest of you do. It's up to her if she wants to tell you but from what I can tell she's going to be pretty good. If somebody else shows better promise later on than we can always switch who's going to be in the starting lineup but for now at least we have a team to focus our attention on instead of dividing it between all ten of us."

Susan said, "That is a good plan. From what I remember also, the only person that was better than all of us was Harry and I can understand why he won't be able to duel because it would show much of his abilities. But I believe that if a tie does come and Harry is selected than he should compete though."

Harry turned to her and said, "I agree. It would be anybody's responsibility to be in the tie breaking duel if they are selected."

Dumbledore said, "Now that we have two of our teams down. Who are going to have on the quidditch team?"

Hermione said, "I'm not an expert on quidditch or anything but I believe that we can settle on Ron being the keeper, Harry being the seeker, and Ginny as one of the chasers. Other than that, I'm not sure about the other positions."

Susan said, "I'm not that great but I've practiced at being a chaser with Ernie who has worked out with the Hufflepuff team as a beater. We were going to try out for the house team but I guess there's no quidditch other than this."

Harry said, "That leaves one chaser and one beater left."

Terry said, "I can play the other beater position. I don't play for the house team but I helped them practice in years past."

Harry said, "Alright then, so who's going to take the last chaser position?"

Kayla said, "I can play the last chaser position. I didn't play at AIM but occasionally joined a pick up game whenever they were looking for people to play."

Harry nodded than said, "So we have Ron in Goal and I think that Michael should work as back up to him, Terry and Ernie as beaters, Ginny, Kayla, and Susan as chasers, and me as the seeker. I think that Ginny should also work as my backup. Luna can work as the back up to the chasers. If the beaters have problems than we'll just have to figure something out later on because I don't think we'll be able to get Hermione on a broom."

Hermione nodded to the rest of her team. Dumbledore said, "Since we've got that much settled for now. The first competition will be in the middle of October. You will be asked to study whatever you can because anything is open to being questioned."

The team left the office and headed back to their respective dormitories after saying bye to each other and plan on meeting after dinner to plan out how everything is going to work. When they made it back to their personal common room, Ron went off to look for food

while Hermione went to start her homework. Neville was already working on his homework when the group made it back.

Shortly after making back, the portrait of Rowena Ravenclaw opened up and Luna came in with her trunk levitated behind her. Harry went to setup everything for Luna and Ginny came to help her settle in. When Harry came out from the girls' room after setting up Luna's sleeping arrangements, he entered the common room where Hermione and Ron were bickering about studying and eating habits. Harry snuck off to the boys' room and went down his trunk to train and finish his homework.

The next morning, Harry woke up as usual at five in the morning and headed down to the quidditch pitch again to exercise. Harry was joined this morning on his work out with Blaze while he was jogging and Nightlight while he was flying on his broom. By the time Harry made it back to his room to get ready, Ginny was already sitting in their common room waiting for him.

Once he came in, Ginny asked, "Good morning Harry. Where were you this morning?"

Harry replied, "Morning Gin. I was just working out. I work out every morning to try to get in shape. I'm just going to take a shower and get ready. Do you want to join me for breakfast?"

With a smile, Ginny said, "Sure, hurry up and get ready."

After getting ready for the day, Ginny and Harry made their way down to the Great Hall for breakfast. They were having fun talking to each other with the occasional bite from there breakfast. About halfway through breakfast, they were joined by the rest of there friends and the Great Hall was alive with chatter again. After breakfast, Harry, Hermione, Kayla, and Neville made there way to double potions while Ron made his way to divination than muggle studies.

The group took there usual places in the back of the class with the Slytherins crowding the front of the class. Potions was filled mostly with Slytherins and nobody knew how it was possible for Crabbe and

Goyle to make it in N.E.W.T. Potions. They were the only Gryffindors to make it along with three Ravenclaws and two Hufflepuffs.

Snape made his way in with the door slamming closed. He stood before the class and said, "This is the most difficult class at Hogwarts. I'm not sure how some of you made it into this class." When he said that he was looking at Harry, Neville, and Kayla, he continued on by saying, "No matter what, once you are unable to keep up anymore than I will have no problems kicking you out. Today we will be starting with the Wolfsbane Potion. Can anybody tell me what this potion is?"

All of the Gryffindors raised their hands along with Draco. Snape completely ignored the Gryffindors and picked Draco who responded, "It's a potion so those loathsome creatures known as werewolves are able to control themselves during a full moon."

Snape said, "Correct Mr. Malfoy and ten points to Slytherin." He continued class by lecturing on the properties of the potion and gave them the instructions to brew the potion. Hermione partnered up with Neville while Harry worked with Kayla. Both of their potions were flawless by the end of class but it required a week to brew. Snape dismissed class feeling very dissatisfied with himself because he was unable to find fault with the Gryffindors during class.

The group had an hour break before lunch so they all headed over to the library to start their homework at the urging of Hermione and Kayla. Neville and Harry didn't put up much of a fight and ended up working on their homework with the girls. They were later joined by Ron, Luna, and Ginny during lunch in the Great Hall.

After all the classes ended that day, the All-star team met up with each other in the Room of Requirement. They were all sitting in comfortable sofas or recliners in a circle discussing how everything should run.

Hermione said, "I think that we should focus all of our attention to the first task and then to the next task after we finish the first one."

Ron replied, "But, I think that we should pay some attention to the challenges later on now so we would be better prepared. After all,

most of the people who will be playing quidditch haven't played in a real match before so they need lots of practice."

The two of them started to argue with each other and than Ginny said, "How about we first start off with pure dedication to the first task and then we start adding quidditch in about a month before the first competition. We could probably use some kind of method to relieve stress anyway."

Susan said, "I agree with Ginny, we can focus all of our attention on the academics at first and slowly including quidditch into the routine. We shouldn't forget that Durmstrang did generate players like Victor Krum."

Hermione knew that she was going to be defeated on her plan so she decided to give. Hermione said, "Alright, I can see where you're going with this. For now though I think that we should partner up to give direct tutoring to a person that's competing in the first task. We should also have a joint meeting once a week to share what we have learned."

Harry said, "I think that's a good idea Hermione. Everybody that's in favor for having partners and than a once a week meeting to share what you all have learned, than raise your hand."

Everybody agreed and than Harry asked, "Who wants to pair up with whom?"

Everybody was looking at each other in silence thinking of who they wanted to work with and who they did not want to work with. Luna said, "It doesn't really matter to me. You all can choose who you want."

Harry said, "I would like to work with Ginny if nobody minds."

Ginny's eyes went a little wide from the surprise announcement, and she was saved from the embarrassment with Hermione saying, "I would like to work with Ron that is if he doesn't mind." Ron also caught a little of guard just nodded his agreement.

Susan said, "I could work with Luna considering she's in her fifth year and I'll be able to help her out with what we learned last year."

Terry said, "That makes sense so I can work with Michael considering I hang out with him more than I do the rest of you with the exception of Susan."

Harry said, "That leaves Kayla with Ernie. If there are no objections to these pairings, I believe that we have our teams. How about we meet on Fridays after lunch for our group meetings just in case we run late there's nothing on Saturday that will interfere with what we are doing."

With that, Harry stood up, offered his hand, bowed to Ginny and asked, "May I ask my fair lady to accompany me to the library to start our new adventure?"

Ginny giggled then said, "Of course, good sir." The two of them bid everybody else good night and went off to the library to start their research to prepare Ginny for the first competition.

A/N: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter. If you have any comments or constructive criticisms I welcome them all. Now to address all of my reviewers since the posting.

Dancerrdw: Thank you for your consistent reviews.

Lily MalfOy13: Thank you and I hope you continue to enjoy the story.

Lonsome-love: Thank you for your praise. Kayla right now has no romantic interest in Harry but can't promise anything later on. As of the planned stages of the story so far, Kayla is a friend at least for now but no telling what will happen when I get too deep into the story because I'm still a little unsure right now.

IamSiriusgrl: Thank you for your compliment and hopefully I'll keep up a steady rate of posting.

Jbfritz: Thank you for your series of reviews.

Slick92: Thank you and I will try to keep up the descriptive nature of the HP world.

Kaleena Mason: Thank you for your review and I'm really glad that you are happy about the magical trunk.

RaeRoark: Thank you for the review and I understand the importance of Chapter 8 if you read 9 and 10 without knowing what happened there. I e-mailed you a copy of chapter 8 that was posted which included the author's notes. Hopefully you were able to read it.

Abby92: I will definitely continue and Kayla is the same age as Harry in this story which is 16.

Chapter 12

Searching for Clues

Harry and Ginny made their way to the library and sat near the back where Hermione usually sat. The study table was empty because Hermione spent so much time there that the other students left that table alone because they didn't want to upset Hermione. Harry and Ginny pulled out their current textbooks.

Harry asked, "How do you want to go about studying?"

Ginny said, "I'm not sure."

"How about we just intensify your studies for the O.W.L.s.? This way you would be both ready for the challenge and for your O.W.L.s."

"That's not a bad idea but what about those other subjects that aren't covered on the O.W.L.s.?"

"We can dedicate a day to foreign subjects, I guess. At least, I don't think that too much emphasis will be given to non-traditional subjects."

"Alright then, so where do we start Mr. Potter?"

"Let's go with DADA. That's my best subject and where I feel most comfortable tutoring."

Ginny nodded her approval and the two of them set off with their studying.

The next morning at breakfast, Ginny and Hermione were talking with each other about what they learned last night, Harry and Kayla were talking about their practice with each other and what they're going to do quietly, Ron was talking about quidditch while Neville was avidly listening and eating, and Luna was eating and reading the quibbler.

The morning post arrived and most of the students and teachers were looking towards the arriving owls to see if they had a delivery. Harry didn't spot Hedwig in the crowd of owls so he returned to his

conversation with Kayla. Kayla didn't seem to expect anything but thought the arrival of the owl posts looked beautiful with all the different type of owls flying in and taking off almost immediately.

It didn't take long for the Gryffindors to be interrupted again when an owl dropped a package in front of Ginny. She picked up an attached letter and when she finished reading she was looking around the hall to see if anybody was looking at her. Her eyes were spending more time somewhere that would put Harry in her line of sight with hope filled in her eyes.

Harry asked, "What is it?"

Ginny handed Harry the note and read it:

Ginny,

Please do not be afraid but I've noticed you for some time. I've watched you from a distance and felt that it was time to tell you that I believe you to be one of the smartest and the most beautiful witch in the entire magical world. I know how much you love to play quidditch and hope that this will help you in the near future. I will reveal myself in due time.

FireFlight

Harry showed no emotion when he read the letter. He handed the letter back to Ginny but it was taken by Ron. Ron's eyes sharpened as he read the letter and the anger in him could be seen rising. Ginny saw this coming and yelled at her brother, "Ron, give that back to me! That letter was addressed to me not you!"

Ron stood up and asked, "Who sent you this?"

He knew he was wrong for acting like this but couldn't control it. Now an argument broke out that held the attention of most of the Gryffindors and a few from Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff. Ginny yelled back, "Like I would know! Obviously, you can tell from that letter that I don't know who wrote it or do you need Hermione to spell it out for you!"

“Don’t you talk to me like that, I’m your older brother and it’s my job to protect you, especially with all of the gits that’s out there!”

“I don’t need you to protect me! I can take care of myself!”

“If you’re going to be getting stalkers who are afraid to show their faces than don’t you think that there is something wrong with them? Apparently, you didn’t notice that you were being watched and you claim to be able to watch yourself!”

“Anybody would be afraid of revealing themselves if they knew that the girl they like has five older brothers that love to threaten anybody that goes near their sister!”

Harry interrupted them by casually saying, “She is right. I would be afraid of Bill, Charlie, Fred, George, and Ron chasing after me.” He turned to Ginny and asked, “What about Percy?”

Everybody turned to look at Harry like he was crazy. They were all thinking, ‘Where did he come from?’ Ginny faced Harry and asked, “What?”

She was so involved in her argument with Ron that she didn’t make out what he was saying. Harry said, “You have six brothers. What about Percy?”

Ginny huffed and said, “He has a long way to go before I forgive him. Plus he is so much into himself that he wouldn’t even notice who I go out with.”

Hermione was glad that Harry managed to stop the siblings from arguing. She asked, “Ginny what was the in the package?”

Ginny said, “I’m not sure. I didn’t get to open it up yet because my git of a brother.”

Ron started to say something but Kayla said, “Why don’t you open it up?”

People started to gather around so they could get a look at what Ginny just got. She unwrapped it and it was a long blue box. Once she opened the box, there were gasps from everybody that managed to see the present. Hermione didn't get to see it yet and asked, "What is it?"

With wide eyes, Ginny lifted the gift and said in awe, "It's the Firebolt F1."

The Firebolt F1 featured a much more comfortable ride than the best Nimbus brooms yet it had just slightly more speed than Harry's Firebolt. The F1 is a red broom that matches Ginny's hair with deep burgundy streaks along the broom to give it a faster appearance. The bristles were tightly wound, burgundy in color, and looked like a tornado on its side.

Ron forgetting about the argument that just took place also in awe said, "That's the fastest broom in the world. There are only ten of those in the entire world and there's only one being used on all of the international quidditch teams."

Harry said, "Ginny, it looks like you're going to be untouchable on the broom."

Ginny was still staring at her broom as Ron grabbed the broom lovingly and said, "This is the fastest broom in the world. It's faster than Harry's Firebolt with incredible handling and comfort. I hear it also has a special charm that nobody knows about that makes the broom unbreakable."

Hermione wasn't as excited about the new broom as everybody else said, "Look at the time, it's almost time for our first class." She was dragging Ron and Harry out of the Hall while everybody else followed. Ginny placed the broom back in its box, shrunk it, and placed it in her pocket.

Upon their arrival to DADA, Remus and Tonks were in the front of the class talking while waiting for the class to arrive. There were chatter amongst the class about Ginny's new broom and who her secret admirer could be. The bell chimed and it was time for class to start.

Remus and Tonks turned to the class and Remus said, "Quiet down. Today we're going to have a little fun. We're going to start a dueling tournament in this class."

There were cheers amongst the class while Harry was not as excited about the announcement. Tonks continued on where Remus left off and said, "The winner of the tournament will be given a chance to take on both Professor Lupin and myself. If you win than you will automatically receive an extra 'O' in this class which will take the place of your lowest grade."

Harry was thinking, 'Well, I can just throw this tournament. I don't want people to know about my abilities just yet.'

There were more cheering from the class. As if Remus was reading Harry's mind, he said, "if there is any cheating or if somebody holds back and not try their best within the confines of the rules of the tournament than you will receive a 'D' which will replace your highest grade.'

Nobody seemed to really care about what Remus just said except for Harry. Tonks said, "We have randomly chosen who will be facing off with whom. Now when I call your name please come to the front of the class." While Tonks was speaking, Remus was in the background setting up half of the class for the duel. He transfigured a large blue dueling platform with swirls of white in it. The platform stood about two feet off of the ground and he placed a shield charm around the platform to protect the spectators from stray spells.

Tonks called out, "Hermione and Ernie."

Hermione Granger and Ernie MacMillan took to the dueling platform and bowed to each other. They each took five paces and turned around ready to duel. Once Tonks finished her count to three Hermione yelled, "Stupefy!"

Ernie jumped to his right and fired back with, "Petrificus Totalus!" The spell didn't reach Hermione as she summoned a shield charm which absorbed Ernie's attack. Hermione fired another stunning spell which forced Ernie to jump again but was hit by a stunning spell that

followed the first one. Everyone was surprised that the duel was so short but Hermione seemed excited of her first win.

The class clapped in congratulation for Hermione on winning and Ernie doing his best. The two of them took there seat with Hermione smiling while Ernie felt a bit put out. Ron faced off with Dean and managed to defeat him with ease. Everybody was looking forward to watching Harry duel.

Harry and Susan Bones took to the platform. They bowed to each other and wished each other luck. They took there five steps and turned ready to duel. At the count of three both Susan and Harry yelled, "Stupefy!" The two spells hit in mid-air and the two spells were trying to break its way through the other spell for a few seconds and than Harry's spell overtook Susan which stunned her.

The class was shocked to see two spells hit each other in mid-air to make it more surprising, Harry's spell absorbed the impact of Susan's spell and stunned her afterwards. The class was completely quiet as Harry walked over to Susan and muttered, "Enervate."

Susan opened her eyes abruptly and Harry helped her up. Harry whispered, "Sorry about just now," to her and she just whispered back, "It's alright." The two of them made there way back to their respective seats with the class still in silence. Remus and Tonks who were much older than Harry and having seen so many duels and fights, yet they never saw that happening before. Both of them have heard of it happening but one of two results always happened. The first and more common result was that the two spells hit each other and dissolve shortly after impact. The second and extremely rare case was that the two spells hit each other and one spell overtakes the other but doesn't have enough strength left to make a significant effect upon impact.

Susan wasn't disappointed that she lost to Harry because she knew that he was better. In fact, she expected to lose but didn't expect to lose in less than five seconds though. When he took his seat, the class started to clap in congratulations to Harry and Susan for doing her best. Ron said, "Bloody hell Harry. I can't believe that you did that just now."

Harry asked, "What's so special about what happened just now?"

Hermione said, "Harry, I don't believe that anybody has seen what happened just now before. I have never heard of two spells hitting each other and still have enough power to still work."

He turned to Ron who nodded his agreement. Harry thought, 'Great, now there's something else to make me different. Hopefully, everybody will still talk about what happened this morning with Ginny's admirer instead of talk about this. I've got to remember to not use that much force anymore. It's a good thing that I only used three-fourths of my strength.'

For the rest of the class, the dueling tournament continued. The second to last match was between Kayla who in her last match, managed to defeat Hermione to the surprise of the class with an unknown spell that made Hermione glow for a second than fall over in a body bind. The person she was facing off against was Neville who also got there by surprise. In his last match, he managed to defeat Ron by using a spell that replicated an image of himself. The illusions of Neville than shot multiple spells at Ron which confused him for he didn't know where to focus his shield and was unlucky enough to choose the wrong spot to use his shield. This resulted with Ron being stunned on his upper arm.

Kayla and Neville stood with their wands ready to duel and awaited the count. Once the duel started it was a heated fight. The two of them were jumping around the dueling platform dodging stunning and bludging spells with the use of shield charms. Neville tried to use the trick that he used on Ron but Kayla sent a charm to the dueling platform which negated the use of illusion charms. The two of them kept on exchanging spells while the class watched on.

Subconsciously, everybody in the room was surprised that Neville seemed to have developed a great deal over the summer and in confidence of his own abilities. Although some thought it might be because of his new wand, because his old one was broken at the Ministry of Magic last year during the fight with Deatheaters. Others believed that Harry and his friends were able to instill some

confidence and faith in him which he started to see in himself, but most believed that it was a combination of both.

The class also agreed that Kayla was an excellent duelist. She didn't appear to get tired easily, comfortable with her abilities, and very knowledgeable with different types of spells because most of the class haven't heard of one spell or another that she was using. Harry knew that he would learn a lot from her and hoped that he would be able to teach her in return because she seemed able to take care of herself.

The duel ended when Neville went to dodge a stunning spell aimed directly at him but for a split second lost his balance. He wasn't used to dueling for so long and became tired. Kayla started to show the first hints of fatigue but managed to maintain her composure. She was able to get an Expelliramus spell to get Neville while he wasn't balanced. He loosened his grip on his wand and it was just enough for the spell to pull the wand away from Neville and in that split second the duel was over.

The class gave both of them a standing ovation which both of them took a bow because Tonks insisted that they did. On their way back to their respective seats, Neville and Kayla were shaking hands with their classmates who wanted to thank them personally. Neville blushed slightly because he wasn't used to the compliments.

Harry was waiting for the winner which was Kayla to get ready for the next duel to determine who the best in the class is. Kayla just finished a long duel and Harry didn't want to show something that he didn't want others to know about. Kayla also didn't want to have to show all of her abilities to the class.

Kayla and Harry looked at each other nodded to each other. Harry raised his hand and Remus asked, "What is it Harry?"

Harry said, "Professor, Kayla and me would like to call our duel a draw."

The class immediately turned to Harry and were wondering what was going on. Tonks asked, "Why is it that you want your duel to be a draw?"

Harry replied, "Kayla is a much better duelist than I am and she just finished a long and tiring duel."

Remus asked, "Kayla what is your take on Harry's proposal?"

Kayla said, "Professor, I would like our duel to be declared a draw also. Although, I believe that Harry is a better duelist. It's just that I have some personal reasons that I don't wish to duel against Harry and he understands why."

Remus said, "You do understand that because of that I can not award the 'O' to each of you in order to be fair to the rest of the class."

They both said, "Yes."

Remus looked over to Tonks and said, "Alright then, so the winners of this tournament is Miss Kayla Rapp and Mr. Harry Potter."

The class congratulated both of them and Hermione asked, "What is the personal reason that you don't want to duel against her?"

Ron said, "Yeah, mate. What is the truth?"

Harry said in a low voice so nobody could overhear them, "Kayla knows that I don't want to show too much of my abilities. She's doing this for me and not for her."

Hermione and Ron knew that was a good idea when Harry said that so they didn't push the issue further. There was only five minutes left to class so there was no point in starting something new so Remus and Tonks dismissed classed early.

Everybody left the class and Harry bid his friends bye for he had the period off while everybody headed off to Charms. Harry and Kayla were standing in the hallway and he remembered something so he told Kayla to go on ahead to the Room of Requirement ahead of time.

Harry ran back into the DADA classroom and said without thinking, "Professor Lupin, I needed to talk to you for a..."

Harry just froze at we he saw, he walked in on Remus and Tonks snogging in the classroom. When Harry rushed into the door, Remus and Tonks tried to get out of a compromising position but they didn't do it quickly enough. Harry continued to stare as Remus and Tonks got more embarrassed about being caught.

Remus said, "Harry, close the door and we'll explain everything."

Harry closed the door, casted a silencing charm on the room, and asked, "OK, now start explaining."

Tonks said, "It started the night that you went missing after the Dursleys were attacked."

Remus noticing Tonks still feeling a bit embarrassed continued on, "Harry, that night you disappeared, we didn't know what to think. The entire Order, the Weasleys, and the Grangers were all scared that you had died that night or was captured by Voldemort."

Harry said, "I'm sorry about that but there wasn't much that I could do. I went to the first place that hoped in my mind."

"It's alright Harry. I know that the place that you went to was extremely safe." There was a pause than Remus continued, "Well, everybody pretty much went into there own little world. I retreated back into my room and Tonks came in to comfort me. She knew that I would take it hard and would blame myself for not having taken better care of you."

Harry interrupted, "I don't blame you for what happened. We all know that that day everybody was stretched fairly thin. You can't watch over me all the time and even if something did happen while you were there, you have to remember that whatever happens is not your fault. I would never hold you responsible for something like that."

Tonks replied, "Harry, you have to remember that also. That if anything happens, we don't want you to blame yourself for what happens because I'm almost sure that Voldemort is responsible for it."

Harry sighed and nodded. Remus said, "Well, since we have that settled. Tonks spent the night comforting me and it didn't really get any better at all. We ended up falling asleep without even knowing it. The next day when you were able to deliver the message, I had a strange feeling that I recognized Nightlight somewhere but couldn't remember but knew that you were safe."

Tonks continued on where Remus left off, "After we received the letter, everybody was glad that you were alive but there was still some question as to were you really safe and were you physically and mentally well. We knew that the phoenix was a good sign but wasn't sure if you were in the open and would be an easy target to attack."

Harry said, "I can promise you that I was safe and well at the place I was hiding."

Tonks nodded and continued on, "Since we didn't know where you were and even if you were safe we had to find you. Remus and I went searching around your Aunt's place for clues. We didn't find anything so we decided to go and to a pub to see if we could overhear somebody talking and maybe we would be able to locate you. That didn't really help at all."

Remus said, "What we didn't realize was that we were spending so much time together and enjoyed each other's company a great deal. We slowly became much closer with every plan that was developed to go search for you. Than one night, while we went undercover as a married couple on our honeymoon in Madrid, Spain, to do something for the Order, we saw somebody that was coming that would recognize us if we didn't do something drastic."

Tonks said, "I pulled him into a kiss but we didn't stop. We just continued to do that until we almost forgot about our mission. When we arrived back at Headquarters, Remus and I had a talk about

different things like him being a werewolf and I'm so much younger than him."

Remus continued, "We concluded that it didn't matter much plus threatening me with the tip of her wand and ever since then, the two of us have been a couple."

Harry said with a smile, "I'm glad for the two of you. I hope it works out."

Remus and Tonks smiled realizing that Harry didn't have a problem with it. They said, "Thank you," at the same time.

Remus said, "Only the Order knows about this Harry so please don't tell anybody."

Harry said, "Don't worry, I won't tell anybody."

Remus said, "Thanks, now what is it that you wanted?"

Harry said, "Oh, I wanted to know if you tried the new Wolfsbane potion that I made for you a few weeks ago."

Remus smiled than said, "I used it the day before school started. It seemed to work great. I didn't have any known complications, my transformation was incredibly smooth, there was little pain, nothing broke, it didn't wear down my body or mind, and I was still able to control my actions with ease."

Harry was trying to not jump up and down with joy when he said, "That's great. I'll try to get some more to you soon. There's no shelf life for them so I can probably produce a large batch and you can store it and use it as necessary. There's possibly another benefit but I can't confirm it yet but if I find out that it will happen than I'll let you know."

Remus said, "Thank you Harry. You don't know how much this means to me." He pulled Harry into a hug.

Harry hugged him back and said, "It's not a problem. Besides I got to use my time for a good purpose."

Harry asked them, "The two of you just gave me an idea, can the two of you help me with something?"

Remus said, "Sure, just as long as it's not illegal or will get you kicked out of school."

Harry and Remus talked a little bit more in hushed tones afraid that somebody might overhear them even though there was a silencing charm over the room. There were some giggling from Tonks through their discussion.

Tonks said, "It looks like our break is over. The next class is going to arrive soon. Why don't you go on ahead Harry?"

Harry said, "Alright, I'll talk to you two later." As he was leaving the room, Harry took the silencing charm off the room. He headed over to the Room of Requirement where he saw Kayla reading a book on a couch.

The room was different because half of the room was for comfortable sitting and the other half of the room had a large open area with a soft surface to soften impacts if you fell on the ground. Harry said, "I'm sorry for keeping you waiting. It just took a little longer than usual."

Kayla looked up from her book and said, "It's alright. I was rather enjoying this book." She placed the book away in her backpack and the two of them headed over to the clear area in the room.

Harry asked, "How do you want to work this?"

Kayla said, "Today, I want to see what your abilities are and you can see what mine are without everybody looking so we don't have to hold back."

Harry said, "Alright, let's get ready."

The two of them assumed the dueling stance and Harry did the counting. On the count of three Harry let loose with a barrage of stunning and bludging spells which resulted in a hail of colorful lights shooting at Kayla. Kayla on the other hand had little difficulty blocking the spells with something Harry had never seen before. Kayla was standing with her right hand out that had a single strip of white paper with Chinese characters written on it that Harry did not recognize. The strip of paper had a faint blue flame dancing around it.

After a minute of the constant barrage of spells, Kayla's shield started to slowly break. Her blue flamed paper slowly changed to a red flame. After the first spell broke through the shield, the paper disintegrated and Kayla had her wand out firing spells back. This forced Harry to change his fighting technique to that of a balance of attack and defense.

The two of them looked like they were dancing amongst a room full of laser lights. As the duel progressed, the fighting became more intense as the speed of the battle increased along with the strength of the spells. Both of them used the entire room from using furniture to shield themselves to all out assault against each other. They continued doing this for about half an hour with the both of them restricting there spell use to those that they learned in the last five years of school.

The duel ended when Harry shot a full body bind spell at Kayla while Kayla summoned another shield with another white strip with Chinese characters on it. This time Kayla was worn and was a tenth of a second too slow which was just enough for the spell to hit Kayla and her body froze and fell over.

Harry revived her and helped her up. Harry said, "That was a great duel. I don't think I've been this exhausted in a very long time."

Kayla said, "That was really good. I didn't think that I would last that long against you. Well, near the end I wasn't holding back anymore and had to use much of the advanced spells that I learned at the end of last year."

They transfigured some new chairs because the ones originally in the room were destroyed along with much of the room. There were craters along the wall and pieces of the walls and ceiling all over the place. The room looked like it was just the scene of a major war.

Harry said, "You know, you can probably beat any student. You're really good at dueling."

Kayla replied, "Thanks, I was just trying my best."

"How did you learn all those different tricks, I've never heard of what you did before."

"Remember earlier when I told you about me learning different styles of magic like from Asia and Africa?" Harry nodded and Kayla continued, "Well, I told you that I liked to take those extra classes in school to learn about it but what I didn't tell you about was that I loved to study those different types of magic that I was in charge of a student club that practiced Asian and African types of magic for the last three years. I guess it was similar to your DA that I hear about but we weren't banned and was open to everybody."

Harry asked, "That would explain why you're so good. What was that thing you did with the strip with what I'm guessing were Chinese characters on it?"

After conjuring some tea for the two of them, she said, "It's an ancient form of magic practiced by the Chinese and Japanese. It has three true types but I only learned two of its uses so far. The first use was a protection shield. It is an extremely strong shield that is reflective of the magical strength of the caster. That was what I did. The second use is detection. It can be used to ward off and detect evil spirits or souls. This is an effect method for determining intruders. It is not a strong at protection therefore the stronger the enemy the less effective it becomes at warding. The last use is attack. To be able to use it to attack is extremely rare and requires a great deal of magical energy. It is not very effective at precision attacking but great for grand scale attacks."

"Why is it not good for precision attacking?"

"The focus required to do a precision attack is so high that only three people during recorded history has been able to do it. The attack is so focused that it can be deadly. Imagine using the equivalent of twenty stunners in the form of one."

Harry said, "You definitely have to teach me how to use that type of magic."

"That's not a problem but you've got to show me how you were able to balance dodging, attacking, and defending without being worn down. I exercise on a regular basis and this fight was worse than most of my work outs."

"That's not a problem. I can show you some other stuff too that I learned on my own."

"So how will this work out?"

"How about you do the teaching on Mondays and I'll do it on Wednesdays. If we need more time we can always work at night time when we're free in this room. How about a change of scenery though?"

"What do you have in mind?"

"I was thinking the quidditch pitch would be better. It'll help us with endurance by working outside, we'll have much more room to practice, and everybody will be in class so we will have the place to ourselves."

"Alright, that's not a bad idea."

The two of them spent the rest of the time talking about what they were going to learn and teach for the next few weeks. Harry also agreed to help her during this time to prepare for the first Durmstrang challenge.

A/N: Here are my responses to my reviewers since my last posting. Please continue to review.

CeDDD: Thank you and I'll keep the updates coming.

Nightwing 509: Thank you and Harry will be doing more of it later on.

IamSiriusgrl: I'm glad that you were glad with the posting and hope you feel the same way about this one also.

BferBear: I hope that you are able to get back into the story. She does become critical to the story and she is not all powerful but she may seem that way. Here's a hint. Not all is as they seem.

Dancerrdw: Thank you and I'll keep updating.

Bobboky: Thank you and hopefully you like this posting.

Lonsome-love: I'm glad you liked it and don't worry the love story is going to evolve more quickly now.

Wytif: You're getting a little warm but you'll see what happens with Kayla. Right now, I plan on having Snape and Harry going to war with each other but haven't written it yet so that could change by the time I get there.

White Merlin: Thank you and hope that you liked this chapter also.

Bommor: Thank you and it is possible for Harry to participate without revealing too much and I did contemplate that issue but wanted other characters to take a more active role in the story.

Angelofdarkness13: Glad you like the story and good luck on yours when you start. Yes there will be some Hermione and Ron along with Lupin and Tonks in this story. So far no Neville and Luna put it is a possibility. What was the couple that JKR said that won't take place?

Realfanficts: Thank you and I'll fix that error with Michael's name from now on in the story.

Gaull: Thank you.

Chapter 13

Ron and Hermione

Harry was in his trunk's library doing his homework alone at night when he heard some loud banging. He went into the sitting room and looked up to see Ron looking down at him and knocking on the edge of the trunk. Harry yelled at him, "What is it that you want Ron?"

Ron asked, "Can I come down Harry?"

Harry said, "Sure, just meet me in my library."

Ron made his way down the stairs and into the library where he saw Harry continuing with his homework. He was thinking, 'Harry has been really busy lately. There must be a reason why he is always so busy.' He said, "Harry, where have you been all the time. We barely see you in the last few days. You seem to run off in a hurry all the time."

Harry looked up when Ron finished talking and said, "I've just been really busy that's all. It's not like it's a big secret or anything. I've just been working on my training. Why do you ask?"

Ron said, "I just have a feeling that you're hiding something from us. I'm sure Ginny and Hermione also have the same feeling."

Harry sighed, took his glasses off, pinched his nose, and wore his glasses again, than said, "The truth is there is something that I know about that you all don't. It is part of the reason why I have been working so hard lately."

Ron asked, "What is it that you're not telling us?"

Harry thought, 'I can't tell them yet. How do you tell your friends that you're going to probably be committing suicide by fighting the worse Dark Lord ever?'

He was interrupted from his train of thought when Ron asked, "Harry, are you listening to what I'm saying?"

Harry looked at him and said, "Sorry Ron, I was just thinking about something."

Ron asked again, "Harry, what is it that you're not telling us?"

Harry said, "I can't tell you right now Ron. It's nothing really." He was trying to find a way to change the subject and asked, "What is it that you wanted to talk about? I have a feeling you wanted to talk about something else."

Ron was thinking, 'I know he's hiding something big now. If he's not talking, it has to do something with his parents, Sirius, or Voldemort. He needs to talk but I guess he's going to not talk about it yet.' He said, "Harry, this matter isn't over but you're right. There's something else I wanted to talk to you about." He paused for a moment and said, "Hermione and me had another fight. Why can't she just admit that she's going out with Vicky? Did you know that she still writes to him?"

Harry asked, "How did you know that she still writes to Krum?"

Ron getting mad again as he was thinking about it said, "We were working on our Charms essay upstairs and my quill broke so I asked Hermione if I could borrow one of her quills. She pulled her backpack onto the table and a letter fell out when she was looking for her quill. I picked it up and it was addressed to her from Viktor. I picked it up and well we just started arguing."

Harry sighed, thinking, 'Ron, you need to hurry up and just snog her already. At least that way the rest of us can finally have some peace.' He said, "Ron, I'm pretty sure that she's not going out with Krum. She told us already and really has no reason to lie about it. Why would she lie about it? Just think about it Ron."

Ron was quietly thinking for a while and asked, "Harry, do you think Hermione fancies anybody?"

Harry said, "I'm pretty sure that she is but she's just too stubborn to admit it."

Ron getting alarmed at what Harry was saying, asked, "Who is it?"

Harry thought, ‘I should just tell him that it’s him to get this over with but he needs to piece the puzzle together himself.’ He said, “I’m not going to tell you who it is but I will tell you that you know him very well.”

Getting annoyed, Ron asked, “Why don’t you want to tell me? I thought that you were my best mate and supposed to watch my back Harry.”

This was Harry’s opportunity to get Ron to realize who it is. Harry asked, “Why are you so interested in Hermione’s love life?”

Ron thinking that he managed to break Harry exclaimed, “I knew it! You admit that Hermione has a love life.”

Harry shook his head knowing that this was going to be a little more difficult to get the point to Ron. Harry asked again, “Ron, why are you interested in Hermione’s relationships?”

Getting a little annoyed with being asked the same question asked, “Why do you keep asking me the same thing again? I’m just looking out for her that’s all just like I look out for Ginny. I figured you would be also. She is after all our best friend.”

Harry said, “For one thing, I do look out for Hermione and Ginny’s best interests but in this situation, I think that that she’s perfectly safe. The second thing is, do you think of Ginny and Hermione in the same way?”

Ron getting slowly getting more annoyed with Harry’s calmness, his knowledge of something about Hermione that he doesn’t know, and constantly asking him questions said more forcefully, “Of course I see the both of them in the same way.”

Harry immediately followed up by calmly saying, “Are you sure about that or are you trying to lie to yourself?”

Ron yelled, “Yes, Harry, I’m sure!”

Harry still calmly said, "Why are you lying to me?"

"I'm not lying to you Harry! Why do you keep on saying that I'm lying?"

"So you're saying that if I go see Hermione right now and snog her right in front of you than you're not going to get mad."

"You better not do that Harry! I'm warning you right now! So it was you that were talking about earlier than! You fancy Hermione!"

"Why shouldn't I Ron? I figured you would trust me with her."

"Stay away from her! Harry, you better not try anything!"

"Why should I stay away?"

Ron didn't respond. He just stood there and stared daggers at Harry. Harry slowly packed all his books and notes away and placed it back into his backpack. He stood up and wore the backpack and walked towards the door to his library. He turned around and Ron was still staring at him. Harry said, "Since you're not going to say anything, than you can come watch me and Hermione."

Harry quickly left after saying that and Ron in a mad dash rushed after Harry. The two of them left the trunk to go search for Hermione who was sitting in their common room talking to Ginny.

While Harry and Ron were talking in Harry's trunk, Ginny and Hermione were sitting in their common room doing their homework. Hermione was still upset with herself and Ron for the argument that they just went through over Viktor Krum. Hermione said, "Your brother gets on my nerves so much!"

Ginny sighed and thought, 'Why don't the two of you just admit that you like each other. Everybody at Hogwarts would really appreciate it if you two would just become a couple already.' She said, "I guess the same reason that he gets on your nerves is the reason why you get on his nerves."

Hermione asked, "What are you talking about?"

Ginny shook her head and said, "Hermione, I thought that you were the smartest witch at Hogwarts. Why don't you think about it for once without all of the denial?"

"What are you talking about? I'm not denying anything. Your brother gets on my nerves. He jumps all over me every time Viktor is mentioned."

"Hermione, you're my best friend and it's really not easy to watch you two run in circles. Honestly, the two of you are really thick headed."

Hermione was getting annoyed with Ginny for not just saying what she wants to say. Hermione said, "Ginny, why don't you just say what you want to say?"

"You're a smart girl, Hermione. You can figure this out on your own. Don't say you don't know either."

"Ginny, I really don't have time for this. We have homework to work on." Hermione turned back to her books.

Ginny was thinking, 'I should just lock Hermione and Ron in a broom closet and let them settle there business and don't let them out until they do.' She looked over at Hermione and asked, "Hermione, why is it that you were glaring at Susan Bones when she was looking at Ron during lunch yesterday?"

Hermione looked around the room for a bit and mumbled, "She's been trying to hook up with Ron. Good thing Ron is too thick to notice it though."

"Why would you be resentful to Susan for that? It's not like he's dating anybody."

Hermione was mumbling something that Ginny couldn't hear. Ginny asked, "What's that Hermione? I couldn't hear you."

Hermione said, "Susan's a big flirt ever since her body became more developed over the break. Ron doesn't need a flirt right now, just look at Harry and Cho."

Ginny scowled slightly at the thought of Harry and Cho and hoped that Hermione didn't notice it. Hermione did see it and said, "Have you seen all those girls flirting with Harry lately?"

Ginny thought, 'Of course, I've seen all those girls around Harry. At least, he didn't show any interest in them.' Trying to get back at the subject at hand, she said, "Don't try to avoid the subject."

Hermione asked, "What would that be?"

"Ron and Susan, all you said was that you didn't like Susan because she's a flirt. What makes you think she's a flirt?"

In an annoyed voice Hermione said, "She was being hit on by almost every guy that is available at school that's not in Slytherin. About all she does is follow a routine of batting her eye brows, blush, and playfully hit the boys she seems to like on their shoulders."

"It doesn't seem that she did anything wrong. It's the boys that were flirting with her and she was responding."

Hermione said, "It's still annoying."

Ginny got an idea and said, "I wonder who Ron likes?"

Hermione looked alarmed and asked, "Who does Ron like? You know something don't you Ginny."

Ginny said, "I think I know who he likes but I'm not completely sure. I think that he's liked this girl for a few years now."

Hermione was deep in thought about all the girls that Ron would have contact with over the last few years. She said, "Who do you think it is? Is it Lavender? Or is it Susan? Could it be Padma or Parvati? What about Hannah?" Hermione continued to shoot out names of every girl that she could think of.

Ginny said, "Well, I'm pretty sure that she's smart. She looks pretty good also and has a very driven attitude to perform well. Not to mention, she's probably really close to him."

Hermione continued to think for a while and than her face went from deep concentration to that of confusion. Ginny found this funny. Hermione ended up saying, "I'm not sure if I know somebody that fits all of those criteria. As far as I know of, Luna and me are Ron's closes friends that are girls."

Ginny replied, "You're getting really close."

Hermione's eyes started to search the room and said triumphantly, "It's Luna. Ron must like Luna. I'm going to kill that girl."

Ginny asked, "Why do you want to kill Luna? I thought that she was our friend. She even shares a room with us."

Hermione said heatedly, "Because she better not lay a hand on Ron."

Ginny said, "You're avoiding the question. Why don't you want Luna and Ron to become a couple?"

Hermione continued to run the scenario of Luna and Ron together and got angrier with each thought. She couldn't hide her anger and just short of yelling said, "It's just not the way it's supposed to be."

"What is it supposed to be?"

By this point, Hermione was not thinking clearly and ready to burst out. She said, "Because, I'm supposed to be with Ron!" Almost immediately she clamped her mouth close with her hand with wide eyes hoping that she just didn't say that out loud.

Ginny smiled thinking, 'I've finally broken Hermione down to admit that she likes Ron. I wonder what she's going to do about it.' She said, "It's about time you admit it. Everybody around the castle has seen this coming for some time but the two of you are just too thick to believe it yourselves."

Hermione started to blush. She tried to hide it by saying, “What about you? I think it’s becoming pretty obvious about who you like.”

Not wanting to go down the road that Hermione just took she stood up to leave. Hermione was too fast and grabbed Ginny’s hand and dragged her back down to her seat. Ginny said, “I’m not sure what you’re talking about.”

“Don’t try to hide now Ginny. You try to say that you no longer like Harry but I’ve seen the way the two of you have been lately.”

“What are you talking about? Harry and me are just friends,” Ginny said hoping that Hermione would believe her.

Hermione wasn’t going to let her off that easily and said, “Ginny don’t try to hide it. You’re always by him now whenever he’s not busy. Whenever you can you try to meet him after class just so you can keep the other girls away. You’re like a one person shield that is protecting him from his admirers and I’m saying all of his admirers, which is half the school.”

“Look Hermione, I’m just looking out for him that’s all.”

“So you’re also looking out for him also when it comes to Kayla. I see that look on your face when there is a mention about Kayla. Not to mention the look you give Kayla every time Harry and Kayla come back from one of their training sessions.”

“Hermione, don’t go there. I don’t look at Kayla any differently than I look at any other girl.”

“Ginny don’t lie. You don’t like the fact that Harry gets touched by any girl except for me. I heard about that beating you gave Lisa from Ravenclaw in the duel during Defense class after she came up to Harry during lunch and bent over in front of him acting like she dropped something just to show Harry a view of her chest.”

“Well, she was just a little slut. I was just giving her a warning to stay away from Harry. He doesn’t need distractions like her.”

"I'm not sure what happened ever since the end of last year but all I can tell is that you and Harry have been getting close."

"We're really close friends."

"I know you're close friends but I think that it might be more. I see how you and Harry look at each other. Harry always seems to search you out during meal times and not to mention when in the library or just out in the field when he's relaxing."

Ginny didn't really think about it. She asked, "Do you think that Harry likes me? I mean, he has lots of choices for girls."

Hermione thought, 'I'm finally breaking her down.' She said, "I'm not going to tell you until you tell me the truth about how you feel about Harry."

Ginny thought, 'I'm pretty sure that I like Harry. I've always liked Harry and that's probably why I've gone through so many boyfriends because none of them are Harry. But do I want Hermione to know. She's his best friend and she'll just run off to tell him. Wait, Hermione wouldn't do that. She has always been able to keep her mouth shut about things in the past that girls talk about. Should I or shouldn't I tell her.'

Hermione was staring at Ginny and waiting for a response. Ginny's face showed that she was contemplating what to say. Hermione asked, "Ginny? Are you even still listening to me?"

That popped Ginny out of her train of thought and asked, "What did you say?"

Hermione sighed, shook her head, and asked, "Are you going to tell me how you feel about Harry?"

Ginny let out a deep breath and said, "Alright." She looked around the room to make sure that it was empty and said, "Yes, I like Harry. Are you happy now? So are you going to tell me who he likes?"

Hermione smiled and said, "It's about time that you admit that you still like him. And I think that the person that Harry still likes is..."

They were interrupted by the sound of Harry walking into the room followed closely by Ron. Ginny's mind was racing, 'Hell, what perfect timing for these boys to walk in.'

Harry walked straight over to Hermione and pulled her from her seat and wrapped her arms around her waist. Hermione was stunned at what Harry was doing and Ginny was thinking, 'Is he about to do what it is that I think he's about to do? Is Harry about to kiss Hermione? Does Harry like Hermione? Oh, Hermione is cruel, she wanted me to admit that I liked him and than rip him away from me right in front of me. I'm going to get this girl for this.' Tears started to form in Ginny's eyes but she held them back and kept her stern face.

Harry while holding Hermione spun her around so that Hermione's back was to Ron and he said, "Ron, either you admit to what you're trying to hide now or I'm going to do it."

Ron yelled, "Harry, you better not do it or I'm going to hunt you down!"

Harry gave up his calm demeanor as he was getting restless with this game and yelled back, "Fine than, if you're not going to say it than I'm going to just do it. I'll give you until the count of three."

Ron yelled, "Leave her alone!"

Hermione yelled, "What is going on here? Harry, what are you doing?"

At this point, everybody was yelling at each other. Harry yelled, "One!"

Ron yelled, "Potter, get away from her now!" He drew his wand as he was saying this.

Ginny snapped out of her stunned state also pulled out her wand but didn't aim it at anybody and yelled, "What's going on here?"

Hermione was looking at Harry and Ron with a look of confusion. At that point, Harry ignored what everybody was yelling and exclaimed, "Two!"

Ron yelled, "If you kiss Hermione, I'm going to kill you!"

This stunned Hermione and all she could do was stare into Harry's eyes but all she saw was a mischievous twinkle but wasn't sure what was going on. Harry turned to look at Ginny, who had a look of shock on her face, and Ron who was raging with anger. He said, "You made your decision than Ron! Now it's time!" There was a slight pause as Harry yelled, "Three!"

Harry turned back to face Hermione and slowly lowered his head to her. Ron feeling helpless yelled, "Fine, I like Hermione!" After saying those four words, he dropped to his knees while his eyes were still locked on Hermione.

Harry smiled and said, "It's about time you admitted to it." He spun Hermione around to face Ron and she had a stunned face on her also. Harry bent down and whispered to Hermione, "Go."

She snapped out of her dazed state and ran over to Ron and the two hugged while kneeling on the ground. After the hug, Hermione grinned and said, "I like you too Ron."

Ron smiled and lowered his head back to Hermione and kissed her on the lips. She was caught off guard at first but wrapped him tighter in her arms and returned the kiss with just as much affection.

Harry smiled at his two friends as he made his way over to Ginny. He grabbed her hands and said, "Gin, why don't we leave them alone for now. Do you want to come take a walk with me?"

Ginny snapped out of her stunned state as the events of what just happened ran in her mind again. She was happy thinking, 'Harry doesn't like Hermione like that. He only did it to make Ron and her get together.' She asked, "What was it that you said?"

Harry asked again, "Gin, do you want to go take a walk with me so we can leave these two to their own business?"

Ginny nodded and the two of them left and headed off towards the quidditch pitch. The two of them were still holding hands as they made it to the center of the field. Ginny was thinking, 'Who is it that Harry likes? Am I holding his hand? How did we end up here?"

Harry conjured a picnic blanket and the two of them laid down in the middle of the field staring up at the stars. They were silent for a while until Harry broke the silence by asking, "How's everything Gin?"

She said, "Everything is fine. How about you?"

Harry said, "Same here. It's a beautiful night out tonight. Not a single cloud in the sky and the stars shining so brightly."

Ginny said, "It is really nice tonight." There was a slight pause and she continued on by saying, "I wonder how Ron and Hermione are doing right now?"

Harry let out a chuckle and said, "They're probably snogging right now. They do have years of denial to make up for."

Ginny said, "Ewww, that is definitely not a mental image that I don't need right now or ever. Let's never talk about my brother snogging anyone or anything."

"Deal, that is not exactly something that I want to think about either. Hermione is like a sister to me so let's not talk about anything like that concerning her either."

Ginny was thinking, 'Now I know for sure that Harry does not like Hermione like that. This is good really good. That's one girl down and the rest of the school to go.' She said, "Deal."

They were in a comfortable silence again until Ginny said, "I wish every night could be like this. The beautiful night sky with no full moon and this comfortable breeze that's blowing, everything just feels

right." What she was really thinking was, 'I want every night for Harry and me to be together alone under the stars just like tonight.'

Harry said, "Yeah, everything is nice tonight." He was looking at Ginny when he was saying that and thinking the same thing that she was thinking.

She asked, "Harry, since when did you start calling me Gin?"

"I'm not sure, but I hope you don't mind. I know that you don't like people calling you anything except for Ginny."

"You're right. I don't like people calling me anything other than Ginny but only you can call me that."

"I'm honored. I get my own nickname for you. Thanks Gin."

There was another silence than Ginny said, "I wonder how many constellations are there out there."

Harry said, "There are lots but I think most of it is kind of dumb though. You can really just make up your own constellation if you wanted to."

Ginny asked, "How?"

Harry responded, "Well, just like when you look at clouds during the day and see shapes or figures based on how a cloud looks, you can do it with the stars. It's like connecting the dots. Let me show you. What shape would you like to see?"

Ginny said, "How about a cat?"

Harry nodded. He stood up, conjured a block and helped Ginny up. Ginny stood on the block which allowed her to stand as tall as Harry as he ran his right hand along her right hand as he raised her hand and pointed one of her fingers to the sky. He drew out an image of a cat in the sky. They loved having this close contact with each other and continued to draw images from the stars in the sky.

After a while, the two of them laid back down on the ground after Harry banished the block that Ginny was standing on. They continued to lay in silence staring up at the sky with an occasional short subject to talk about nothing really until it was late and decided to head back up to their room. Harry got up first, helped Ginny up to her feet, banished the picnic blanket away, and walked back to their rooms holding hands.

A/N: The following are responses to those who have reviewed since my last posting.

Dancerrdw: Thank you for your review.

Jbfritz: Thank you for the review.

Gaul1: Thank you for the review and I'll let you keep guessing on the admirer.

IamSiriusgrl: Thank you and I hope that you liked this chapter just as much.

Tenolian: Thank you and I'll post as soon as I can get the next chapter written.

Bobboky: Thank you and I hope that you like this posting also.

Sierra Potter-Malfoy: Thank you and I'll try to keep it coming.

Nightwing 509: Thank you and I'll try to continue to stay descriptive.

Santa Claus: Thank you and that was very insightful of you to pick that up. I didn't even think of that but that's all I can say about the secret admirer until he is revealed. You might be surprised.

Professor Scott: Thank you and I do read those two stories that you sent a link from. I agree that they are really good.

Lonsome-love: Thank you and I hope that you like this post just as much. Harry will learn that technique and the fight isn't going to

happen soon. Many more events will happen in Harry's life before he fights Voldie.

Hyrufj: Kayla is critical to the story so I will not be getting rid of her. I also like to thank my reviewers because they took the time to do so. Plus, it doesn't take up much space and take away from the story because I answer my reviewers at the end of the chapters.

Moodyboy66: Thank you and I hope that you continue to like the story.

Chapter 14

The DA Returns

Ever since Hermione and Ron became a couple that fateful night, there has been less bickering and all out fighting between the two of them but they still had their moments where everybody just ran and left the two to fight. They still argued about needless subjects but have made a greater effort to tolerate and respect each others opinion. They were even caught snogging a few times around school when they thought they were alone.

Everybody also seemed to notice the changing relationship between Ginny and Harry. They continued to spend ever other night talking to each other in secrecy through their mirrors. During the day, the two of them could be seen together much of their free time that is considering the time outside of preparing Ginny for the first task from Durmstrang and Harry's practice with Kayla or practicing by himself. When asked whether or not they were a couple, both of them said no. Ginny wanted to be with Harry more with every passing moment they spend or talk to each other.

The gang was gathered at breakfast early October when the morning mail arrived. The Great Hall was filled with the sound of owls hooting and hopeful expectations from everybody in the hall that they were going to get a letter or package. An owl dropped a package in front of Ginny. She was surprised by the package and drew everybody's attention that sat around her especially from her friends because Ginny doesn't normally receive packages.

Ginny took the letter that was attached to the package and read it with surprise and a bit of disappointment in her expression. Ron asked, "What does it say, Ginny?"

Ginny said, "It's from my admirer."

Once she finished that statement, Ron made to grab the letter but Ginny was too quick for him. This also drew the attention of a few other people who were walking by especially Lavender and Parvati, the two biggest gossips at Hogwarts. The two sat down near the

group and leaned over in an attempt to hear what the group was talking about.

Ginny noticed that Harry wasn't looking at her anymore and asked him, "Harry, what's wrong?"

Harry turned to look at her and with some reluctance said, "Ginny, I'm not sure if I should say what I want to say."

Ginny asked, "What is it?"

Harry said, "Well, it's just how much do we know about your admirer? Is he safe?"

Ginny started to get angry and said, "Harry, how many time do I have to say this? I can take care of myself."

Harry raised his hands in mock surrender and said, "Ginny, I know that you can take care of yourself. We want to make sure that you're safe also."

Lavender interrupted them and said, "So is Harry Potter jealous of this secret admirer?"

Harry gave her an annoyed look and said, "Why would I be jealous of this admirer?"

Lavender and Parvati gave each other a look and Parvati said, "Everybody sees how much time you two spend together. We also know that the two of you are denying that you're both a couple."

Lavender continued, "If you're not jealous and are not going out with Ginny than that means you're available."

Ginny gave Lavender a look of contempt while Harry just shook his head. Hermione decided to take the heat off of Harry and asked, "Ginny, what did your admirer say?"

Ginny said, "I don't want everybody to know what he said," as she looked at Ron, Lavender and Parvati. She handed the letter over to

Harry, Hermione, and Kayla to read. The three of them leaned together to read.

Ginny,

I'm sorry for not having written to you in such a long time. A girl like yourself should not be neglected. I saw this in a catalogue and thought you would like it. I also charmed it so that it will help protect you against harmful spells.

Please don't be afraid of what I'm about to say but you do know me in real life. Although you don't know who I am right now, I hope to reveal that to you soon. Just so you know, I'm really close to you right now and love every little moment we spent together. I'm just waiting for the right occasion and hopefully you will be taken with me as much as I am taken with you.

FireFlight

Ron impatiently asked Harry, "What does it say, mate?"

After reading the letter, Harry looked around the group to see who was sitting around them and who was looking at the group. Harry said, "I don't see anything suspicious as everybody seems to be sitting where they usually do."

Hermione and Kayla looked around also and Hermione said, "I agree. I don't see anything out of the usual either."

Kayla nodded her agreement as Ron asked more forcefully, "Is anybody listening to what I'm saying? What does the letter say?"

Hermione said, "Ron, if your sister does not want you to know than we can't tell you what the letter said."

Ron turned to his sister and said, "Ginny, what does the letter say?"

Ginny's voice rose as she said, "Why Ron? Why do you want to know so much? If I tell you what it says than you're just going to go off the deep end."

Ron's voice also became louder and said forcefully, "It is my business. I'm your brother and it's my job to make sure that you're protected." He pointed to Harry and said, "Even Harry agrees with me."

Kayla came to Harry's rescue by interrupting with, "Ron, Harry is just concerned. You don't see him ready to jump down somebody's throat even after reading the letter. You on the other hand don't know very much of what's going on and you're ready to kill somebody."

Ron prepared to argue with Kayla by taking a deep breath but it was too long of a wait because Hermione sided with her boyfriend and said, "Don't judge Ron because you don't know him Kayla. We know him better than you do and he does have a right to know that his sister is safe."

This erupted into a war of words with Hermione and Ron going up against Kayla and Ginny. Kayla was arguing based on a defense for Harry and that Harry and Ron are two different people with two different relationships to Ginny. Ron was arguing that he deserves a right to know anything that concerns Ginny. Ginny was arguing that she can live her own life without her big brothers becoming defensive with every person that shows an interest in her. Hermione was pushing the idea that Harry and Ron share the same relationship with Ginny.

Lavender and Parvati along with a few people sitting near them were taking an interest in this dispute because nobody heard Kayla get involved in an argument before. To make it more interesting, she came to the defense of Harry and everybody knew that the two of them were working together outside of class. Nobody knew exactly what they were working on but they had a general idea of defense practice.

The relationship that Harry and Kayla shared with working so much on spells and defense work made many people envy Kayla. Many did not believe that the two of them shared a romantic relationship or had romantic feelings toward one another. This came to a great relief to most of the male population that The Great Harry Potter was not after one of the prettiest girl at Hogwarts which gave everybody else some

hope that they might be able to become involved with her. Kayla also became an envy of many girls because she was spending so much time with Harry.

The general consensus was that Kayla must be really talented witch if she and Harry were working together so much and teaching each other things. This sparked greater interest in working with Harry and Kayla so there were lots of talks about starting the DA. This resulted in Harry telling Kayla about the details of the DA and the events of last year minus a few details from the Department of Mysteries.

Flashback to a few days ago...

After one of their training sessions the two of them were making there way back to the castle from the quidditch pitch. After a moment of comfortable silence which the two have been doing after their training session to help clear there minds before getting back to class.

Kayla asked, "Harry, I've been hearing many people asking about the DA. How come you don't start it up again?"

Harry thought about it for a moment and said, "There really isn't a need to restart the DA. Remus and Tonks are really good teachers and everybody seems to be learning a great deal from them."

Kayla nodded than said, "From what I hear, many people want to restart the group again. They said that they learned so much from you."

Harry replied, "It's nothing really. I had a great time helping them learn new things but Remus and Tonks are covering most of the same things that we learned last year."

"Nobody said that you couldn't cover the same things again and add a few things that you know that they aren't going to teach in class. Plus the younger students would be learning a lot of new things before they arrive to where we are now."

Harry thought about it for a moment and said, "I guess we can start it up again but I guess it wouldn't really be necessary until something

happens like last year when we had to take the learning into our own hands.”

“Harry, if you wait for something to start than it might be too late. Wouldn’t it be better if we started the training early so we will be ready just in case anything was to happen?”

“I guess you’re right. I’ll think about it though and start it back up when I feel it is needed.”

“Alright, just think about it. I’m sure that Hermione, Ron, and Ginny will be more than willing to help you. I can also help if you need me to after all, we can teach them some of the stuff that you’re learning from me right now. But at the pace we’re going, you’ll know everything I can do and I’ll just be learning from you afterwards.”

“Well, I only learned so much because you’re a good teacher. I’m sure anybody else would be learning as quickly as me if they were learning from you. Oh, before I forget, maybe you should talk to Hermione and get a coin made for you just in case I decided to start it up again. That is if you want to join.”

“I never thought you to be a sweet talker Potter. Thanks, I’ll talk to her later. But, speaking of other people, what’s going on between you and Ginny? If I’m not mistaken, the two of you are pretty much inseparable now a day outside of class and you being with me.”

Harry was thinking about what he has been doing ever since he returned to Hogwarts than said, “I guess you are right that I do spend much of my time with her. We’re really good friends and nothing more. Why are you interested?”

Kayla turned to him and said, “It’s just everybody either believes that you’re involved with me or with her. Don’t get me wrong, you’re a great guy and all but I don’t have a romantic interest in you.”

“Well, I guess the feeling is mutual than. Don’t be offended and all but you’re incredibly pretty and fun to be around but I think that my heart belongs to only one other.” Harry wanted to slap himself for that slip just now.

Kayla pulled Harry's arm to stop him from walking and said, "Who is this girl?"

Harry became defensive and said, "That's a secret and I can't reveal it yet. It's too dangerous for anybody to be involved with me."

"You know, if you like her than you should pursue her. If you let Voldemort control how you live your life than I guess you're not really living."

"I guess you are right. It's just another thing for me to contemplate about, I guess."

End of Flashback...

As the two groups were arguing with each other, Harry took that as his cue to leave. He slowly pulled away from the table and made his way to leave the Great Hall. Nobody seemed to notice that Harry was leaving. He made it about half way through the Hall when a single owl showed up that appeared to be running a little behind all the other owls delivering the morning posts. The owl flew over to Harry and dropped a letter in front of him and immediately turned and flew away. Harry picked up the letter and read it while standing in the middle of the Great Hall while nobody noticed.

Harry,

I know that there is no reason for you to really listen to what I have to say but please hear me out. I know that you don't trust me but I can not betray you because of my life debt to you and right now I'm trying to pay that debt back. If the Dark Lord or any of his men were to know what I am doing right now it would result in a torturous death.

There are spies all among you. I do not know right now who they are but all I know is that they are extremely close to you and are feeding information to Dumbledore about your actions. I know that you're still not on the best terms with Dumbledore and he knows that also that is why he has enlisted spies to inform him on what is going on.

The Dark Lord only knows that you're being spied upon and has not received any useful information about what is going on. The Dark Lord's spy at Hogwarts only knows bits of information as this person couldn't retrieve all the information. As a result, there is talk here in the Dark Circle that we should get you to join our side. Just look at those that you trust as betraying you.

Remember there is no such thing as good and wrong. There is only power and those that are willing to fight for that power. Come join the Dark Circle, I will contact you later to get your answer.

Wormtail

Harry crumpled up the letter as the anger in him was building. He turned to look at everybody in the Great Hall to see if anybody was paying attention but once again nobody seemed to notice. He looked up to the head table and saw Dumbledore talking to Remus. Harry glared at Dumbledore as his mind started to race.

He was thinking, 'Who is it that is betraying me? I can't believe that Dumbledore would do this behind my back. Wait, what if Wormtail is lying and this is just another trick from Voldemort? There are still too many questions unanswered but how will I find them out without some help? I can't tell anybody until I find out more information. This is not a good thing. I must prepare and the students need to get ready also.'

Harry reached down into his pocket and felt what it was that he was looking for. He felt the gold Galleon that was used to notify the DA members in secrecy. Harry hoped that all the members were carrying their coins with them so he held the coin with a firm grip and assigned the date and time for a meeting.

Throughout the Great Hall with the exception of the Slytherin table and the head table, there were startled expressions as students felt something warm in their pockets. There were many people who reached into their pockets to pull out their coins to see what the date and time of the meeting will be. They also looked around to see if they could find Harry but all they saw was Harry leaving the Great Hall.

Harry spent the rest of the day and the next day avoiding everybody because they wanted to find out more details about the meeting. This came at great difficulty at night time so he locked himself in his trunk to avoid his friends. Ginny tried calling him a few times in the mirror but it didn't work.

Harry showed up at the Room of Requirement before anybody was there and thought of what he needed in that room. Harry walked in with a box and sat behind a small table that was on a slightly elevated stage. In front of the stage were rows of comfortable arm chairs for members of the DA to sit in.

Harry's friends were the first to show up and Ginny asked, "Harry, what's going on? Why have you been avoiding us?"

Harry sighed and said, "I'm sorry about that but I had something that I had to work out before the meeting today."

She didn't like the explanation that he just gave so she pressed him and asked, "What is it that you're not telling us?"

"There is just something I need to work out but when the time comes, I'll tell you about it."

Hermione said, "You'll tell the rest of us also, right?"

Harry replied, "I'll tell all of you when I figure it out."

Everybody from the DA last year showed up again minus those that graduated and Marietta Edgecombe, the girl who betrayed the DA to Umbridge last year. Harry told his friends, "Why don't you all go take a seat so we can start the meeting."

The group nodded and went to take a seat with Ginny saying, "This isn't over yet, you're going to tell me what's going on," than went to take a seat.

Harry stood up and looked at everybody who all seemed to share a look of anticipation of what Harry was about to tell them. He took a

deep breath than said, “First off, I want to welcome everybody back to the DA. Today is just a quick meeting to let everybody know that I will be starting the DA up again but we will be known as the Defense Association now instead of Dumbledore’s Army until another name can be settled upon.”

There were some confusion in the room but most of the people knew it had to do with the strained relationship between Harry and Dumbledore over the last few months ever since he returned from the Ministry of Magic at the end of last year. Not too many people knew why but many of them knew not to ask what happened.

Harry continued on by asking, “I want to know right now, who is willing to fight against Voldemort and his Dark Army that consists of wizards, giants, dementors, and who knows what else?”

There were widespread wincing at the mention of the name Voldemort. Ginny stood up first and said, “We’ll follow you Harry. We’ll be there to fight against the Dark Army.”

That encouraged everybody else to stand up and voice their agreement with Ginny. The noise became deafening as people started to chant, “Potter, Potter!”

Harry raised his hands to calm everybody down than asked, “How many of you will follow me if I go against the Ministry of Magic?”

There were murmurs of disagreement and discussion at what Harry was asking than Hermione stood up and asked, “Why are you asking us that?”

Harry said, “Everybody knows that I don’t agree with what the idiot Fudge is doing. If he continues on his path than all of us will end up dead anyway, what I want to know is if I believe what I am doing is right is different from what the Ministry believes is right than who will you all choose?”

There was discussion than Ron said, “You know I’m by your side no matter what. I stood by you through thick and thin and now I won’t abandon you either.” This sparked an overwhelming agreement that

they would follow Harry as many yelled out, “The Ministry is full of idiots,” or, “We know that you’ll always defend the light.”

Harry waited for the room to calm down than asked, “I have given this some thought and believe that we should expand our membership to others who may be interested in joining. Only those that we believe to be loyal and trustworthy will be admitted with disregard to what house and what year they are in.”

Michael Corner stood up and asked, “Are you saying that you would let a Slytherin join the DA? How do you know that you will be able to trust them look at what happened to somebody that we thought we could trust last year.” Everybody knew that he was talking about Marietta Edgecombe as whispers broke out with agreement to what Michael just said.

Harry said, “I don’t believe that all Slytherins are evil and believe that a few of them can be trusted. It may come as a surprise to many of you but the Sorting Hat during my first year wanted to sort me into Slytherin but I managed to persuade it not to.”

There were surprised expressions throughout the room than continued on by saying, “We’ll make them take a Wizard’s Oath when they join and question them under Veritaserum. We will know if they are truthful or not in their membership and if they break their Oath than they would lose their credibility in the Wizarding World. Plus, I have other ways of teaching those that betray us that will be much harsher than what happened last year to Marietta.”

After saying that, there were some reluctant agreements to allowing the DA to allow new people to join. Harry than asked the hardest question for many of them to answer by asking, “If I were to go in a different path from Dumbledore, who here will follow me, follow Dumbledore, or stay on the sidelines?”

The room was completely quiet with shock at what Harry just asked. Hermione, Ron, Ginny, Neville, Luna, and Kayla were just as shocked as everybody else. Ginny stood up again and said, “Harry, that is a big thing that you’re asking of us right now and especially since we don’t know what the situation requires.” There was nodding from

everybody else in the room to show their agreement with what Ginny was saying.

She continued on by saying, “I trust you with my life and know that whatever happens than you will be following your heart. Because of your heart and the purity and love that live inside of it, I will follow you to hell if you needed me to.” There was a pause than she said, “Even if you didn’t need me to or want me to, I’ll follow you anyway just like last year.”

Harry sighed at what Ginny just said because he knew that she would follow him to death if he were to go there just to finish his task. He said, “Look, I’m not going to demand your loyalty to what I do. I know that I’ve screwed up many times in the past and it has cost lives. I just want to know if I can trust you all not to betray me to Dumbledore if things get down to between me and him.”

Kayla stood up and said, “I can not promise that I will follow you in whatever decision that you choose to make. About all I can promise is that I will do what I believe is right.”

Harry nodded and said, “That is all that I can ask for. For you all to do what you believe is right and not because you are afraid of some kind of consequences like death or expulsion from Hogwarts. You must do what is right or else you will become like the Deatheaters. They are a group of cowards that sold their soul to an evil man because they were too afraid to stand up for what is right.”

Cho Chang stood up and asked, “We’re not allowed to be afraid now? What gives you the right to say that we are not allowed to be afraid?”

Harry shook his hand and said, “I’m not saying that you can not be afraid. It is within human nature to be afraid. I’m fearful every single day that one of my friends or their family members will be hurt or killed but I will be there to fight for them and not run away or turn evil just to save my life.”

Cho sat back down in agreement to what Harry just said. Neville stood up and said, “I promise that I will do what I believe is right and I

guess you know that I will go after them with everything ounce of strength left in me to defend the light.”

Harry nodded as he remembered that Neville’s parents were tortured into insanity because they were protecting Neville and refused to surrender to Death Eaters. He said, “I know that I can trust you Neville.”

Everybody else expressed the same sentiment that they would fight and defend in what they believed to be right. Harry raised his hand for everybody to calm down and said, “If you ever want to leave than feel free to. We are not going to force any ideas on anybody else for we must practice tolerance for different beliefs. We must educate each other on the reasons why we believe what we do so everybody will understand what they’re doing and the consequences of their actions.”

Harry lifted the box off of the ground and placed on the table in front of him. He said, “If you still want to continue being a member of the DA than I will ask that you come up here to sign a new piece of parchment that will require your loyalty to the organization and not betray us. This does not bind you to our beliefs but you will not give away what we are learning here and what plans or actions that we may partake in.”

He reached into the box and pulled out a simple watch and said, “This watch is made out of white gold, has a leather black band, charmed to run on magic, and always show the correct time. It is a simple analog watch that will also show you the date and day of the week.” He paused and said, “The coins were too suspicious and many people would find it awkward that all of you were looking at your coins especially like what happened a few days ago in the Great Hall when I set the date and time. Therefore, I decided to go with a watch so it would look like you’re just checking to see what time it is. These watches have other options on them to make it more useful.”

Harry tapped the watch that he was holding with his holly wand to make the face of the watch as large as he was to show everybody. He said, “The face of the watch as you can see is white so that messages can be color coded. If there is a message than the watch

will become warm to let you know what is happening, the message will scroll along the edge of the face of the watch.” Harry pointed to the area between the outer rim of the watch and the diamond shaped ticks that marked the time.

He continued on by saying, “If the message is in black than it is not critical like the time and date of the next DA meeting and where we will meet just in case we have to move our meeting. If the message is in red than it is urgent like an attack is happening or will happen soon to alert you to be on your guard and to inform you on the location of the attack and time. If the message is green than it is a private message to the person wearing the watch like some kind of private issue needs to be resolved. Another feature on this watch is a distress and locator option. If you are in trouble than you just pull this knob out and leave it pulled out than my watch will be alerted to you being in trouble, find you, and send help.”

The room was pleasantly surprised at the planning that went into setting up these watches and Hermione asked, “Are there any other features on the watches?”

Harry nodded and said, “There is one more feature which is more cosmetic and reduces suspicion than anything else but will be useful to many who like to coordinate their accessories to what they are wearing. This watch can change shapes and colors to what you would like by tapping it with your wand. I know this feature will be more useful to girls especially when they are getting dressed for some kind of occasion that requires a less conspicuous accessory.”

This sparked the interests of many of the members especially Lavender and Parvati as they were looking at the watches as great accessories to play around with every day. Harry said, “If you want to continue your membership than come up, sign your name, get a watch, and you may leave unless there is anything anybody would like to say or talk to me in private.”

Nobody said anything so a line formed as everybody walked up, signed their name, picked up their watch, and left. Many of the members, mostly girls, were playing with their watch to see what they could turn it into and the different colors that it would become.

After the last person left, Hermione, Luna, Neville, Ron, Ginny, and Kayla were all waiting for Harry before they all left. Hermione said, "That was a really good idea with the watches Harry."

Harry said, "Thanks, it was based on your idea."

Ginny asked, "What's up with those questions? I hope you're not trying to create an army to go against the Ministry and Dumbledore."

Harry replied, "I just want people to think about a few things before they have to make these decisions at the last minute or worse in the middle of a fight."

Ginny accepted his explanation and decided not to press the issue any further. The group made their way back to their private suite which now included Kayla as she became part of their inner circle.

When they made it back to their suite, Hermione and Ron headed off to do their Prefect rounds but many suspected that they went to go snog while Neville and Luna did their assignments on the table in their common room while Harry worked with Ginny and Kayla in trying to get the two of them ready for Durmstrang but Kayla seemed to already know these things so it was more of Harry and Kayla were working with Ginny. Ginny meanwhile only wanted to work with Harry and spend some alone time with him.

A/N: Now to answer all of my reviewers since my last post.

Nightwing 509: Thank you for your review and hope you like the DAs return

Ima Quidditch Fan: Thanks on the review and I hope that this makes you feel a bit more comfortable with Kayla.

Dancerrdw: I hope that this still gets your awesome approval and thanks for your review.

IamSiriusgrl: Thanks I hope you liked this chapter just as much.

Bobboky: Thank you and hopefully you liked this posting also. Don't we all wish we were as smooth as him?

Jbfritz: Thank you.

Bandgsecurtiyaw: Thank you.

HPandGWfan: Thank you and I'll try to keep you satisfied

Rivenn: Thank you and I guess I could tell you without harming the story. But later on it will be explained that the reason why he didn't tell them because it was his safe haven away from everything.

Unik: Thank you and hopefully I'll keep you as happy as it continues

Lonsome-love: Thank you and sorry they're not kissing yet. Still needs a bit more tension, yes I know its evil but hopefully it will make it better. Hopefully you like this chapter also.

Santa Claus: Thank you and I still think you're insightful. Sometimes I do feel like I'm forcing the internal dialogue but I thought they needed it to make the readers understand more. I'll try to work on improving that.

Cynthia1850: Thank you for the praise and I wish that I could just drop everything and write but I guess school and work are just as important.

Johnny Emo: I felt that I'm taking Harry's character a bit out of what JKR's synopsis but I felt the hero should be a bit more confident as he develops his ability. I will try to deny him things and this will most likely take place after Christmas. Ginny and Harry will get together soon so don't worry. I know how you feel about holding them off and its difficult for me not to throw them together but I need to hold it off so the story can work better. Oh and Neville did become more confident with a combination of a new wand, events of the DOM, and being close friends with Harry, Ron, Ginny, and Hermione.

Deathcanwait89: Thank you and the first challenge is arriving really soon so hang in there.

Chapter 15

Durmstrang's Arrival

Harry and Ginny were sitting in Harry's library in his trunk. They were going through some last minute review before the first competition was to take place. The two of them have been inseparable for the last few weeks much to the pleasure of Ginny. She was still confused about him though. They would be seen occasionally walking around holding hands or when one of them did something great like solve a problem or accomplish a spell they couldn't before while practicing they would hug each other unusually yet comfortably longer than they would hug somebody else for the same reasons. Ginny's been trying to get the courage up to ask him about how he feels about her but didn't want to risk the close friendship that the two of them share that some would say making her closer to Harry than Hermione or Ron.

To make matters more confusing for Ginny, she had an admirer that she really wanted to meet and appeared to be very nice. Not to mention, the method of approaching her seemed romantic. The added benefit of this secret admirer method was Ron losing his top every time Ginny received another letter which appeared to be coming every other day. Many people at first suspected that it was Harry, Dean, or Colin. Colin and Dean denied being the admirer or knowing who the admirer was which left Harry. The idea that it was Harry confused much of the school because everybody knew that Ginny still liked Harry and would be able to get her if he wanted to. Nobody could confirm that Harry had romantic feelings toward Ginny because he refused to talk about anything personal anymore. What nobody knew was that Harry wasn't going to reveal anything about himself anymore until he can find out more about Wormtail's letter. Although the school debated that if Harry was to choose a girl it would either be Ginny or Kayla. Harry seemed oblivious to all of this.

Ginny was unable to concentrate on what Harry was telling her about protection charms that are placed on inanimate objects given to other people as gifts. Harry noticed this but continued on for a while longer until he stopped his explanation and tapped Ginny on her shoulder which brought her out of her daze. He asked her, "Ginny, what's bothering you? You seem distracted today."

When Harry asked her that, she went back into thinking about what was bothering her, Harry had to snap her out of it again and asked, “What’s bothering you?”

Ginny said, “Nothing really, I guess just the secret admirer issue.”

Harry closed his books knowing that nothing else was going to be accomplished for the rest of the day than asked, “What about the secret admirer?”

“Well, it’s just I wonder who it is. Not to mention, why hasn’t he revealed himself yet? Plus, I wonder why it is that he likes me because he must know that when people find out whom he is than there will be lots of questions to answer. You know just things like that.”

Harry nodded while saying, “Have you talked to anybody about it?”

Ginny shook her head. She said, “There’s not much to talk about I guess, everybody has the same questions about him as I do. I guess everybody is just as clueless about this situation as I am.”

“Only you know who it is that you have talked to over the years and became friends with. So it must be somebody that you know.”

Ginny thought about it for a moment than said, “Harry, have you been searching for who it is? I know you talked about wondering who this person is and is this person really safe to be around.”

Harry didn’t want to tell her the truth because he did know who this person was. Harry looked away from her acting like something caught his attention than said, “No.”

The answer was just too short and Harry was acting too weird for her to believe him. She knew that something was going on and that Harry knew. She asked again but more bluntly, “Harry James Potter, who is my secret admirer?”

Harry tried to sound confident, turned to face her again and said more boldly, “I don’t know who it is.”

Ginny's instincts were telling her that he knew who he was so she became more aggressive and said, "Don't try to lie to me. You're a horrible liar and this act is you're putting on is not very convincing. Harry, I know that you know and you're just better off telling me who it is."

Harry relented because he did not want to get the youngest Weasley mad because even if she is the youngest of the clan, she is also one of the most dangerous to mess with when angry. Harry told her, "I do know who it is but I can't tell you."

Ginny calmed a bit with Harry's answer but quickly asked, "Why can't you tell me?"

"I know your admirer and know that he has the best of intentions and will do anything to protect you. That is part of the reason why I can't tell you. He has to figure a few things out first but I have a feeling that he will tell you soon enough."

"What is it that he needs to figure out?"

"Well, your admirer wanted to let you know that somebody did like you and for some time. Ever since he found out that you were not seeing anybody he decided to make his move that way you would keep him in mind if he ever decided to reveal himself. He wanted to figure out how to go about your family because he knows how they react every time you have a boyfriend not to mention the dangers you would be in because he tends to attract trouble."

Ginny nodded, thinking that those would be some of the reasons that would deter many from entering a relationship with another person especially given the war that was going on now. She said, "I don't think that my family will accept who ever it is that wants to go out with me at first but if he stands by me and proves that he will protect me and care for me with all his heart and soul than my family will be fine with him. It's just that they want to make sure that I am taken care of not to mention the over protectiveness of their little sister." She paused a moment than continued, "Everybody knows that I get myself into enough trouble. I'm not afraid if trouble comes to find me

at an increasing rate or I become You-Know-Who's main target. I will always stand by those I love and will fight with all my heart and soul to join the fight to protect them. They also know that I'm really good friends with you and would put my life on the line if it meant that you would be protected."

Harry sighed than said, "Ginny, I know that you would die for me and I hope that you would not. If I enter a fight, I don't want anybody else to be injured. What happened last year at the Ministry of Magic snapped me back to reality that me and my friends are not immortal and can easily die. This is really a fight that I wished everybody stayed out of, if I die than only I will die and not anybody else because of my foolish mistakes or what Hermione calls the hero complex."

Ginny looked at Harry's eyes and saw all the emotions that filled him through his life. She saw sorrow, doubt, regret, pain, and for the first time she saw fear. Her emotions flared at all the abuse that he went through all his life. She wanted to just wrap him in her arms to tell him that it would be alright. Ginny said, "There's nothing that could happen that will keep me from being by your side and helping you Harry. We know all the dangers and hurt that will bring with being associated with you and we will not abandon you. You are more than a friend to Ron, Hermione, Luna, Neville, Kayla, Dumbledore, McGonagall, Lupin, Tonks, my family, and especially me."

Harry saw determination and hope in her eyes as she was talking. He said, "I know that you all would stand by me no matter what happens but that's just it. I wished that you all wouldn't so if I die in this war than nobody would be hurt. Sometimes I wonder if it was a good thing meeting Ron for the first time in the train on the way to Hogwarts during first year."

Ginny felt hurt that Harry had said that but masked her emotions. She asked, "Harry, do you regret being our friend?"

Harry's eyes filled with determination when he said, "I don't regret it at all. You all are my friends and pretty much what I consider to be my family. I've learned more of how to love others and live my life from all of you. If it wasn't for each of you and in each a unique view of life

and the hope for the future and your respective friends and family, I don't know if I would have lived this long. It's just I wished that I didn't carry so much luggage which makes being friends with me hard. Each one of you almost died because of me with the exception of Kayla but with my track record she will be included pretty soon."

Relief swept through Ginny when he said that he didn't regret knowing them. She said, "All of us share a bond that is just as close as a family. All of us have an unspoken bond that no matter what happens we will be there to help each other, fight for each other, and if we have to die for each other. I know that my dad would be more than willing to lay his life down for you and so would I just like I know that you would do for me. You already proved that during my first year when you went to the Chamber of Secrets and saved me at your expense. You would have died if it wasn't for Fawkes." She looked away from him for a moment than turned back to face him gave him a hug and said with a smile, "Thanks Harry. Thanks for saving me."

They pulled away from each other slightly but still wrapped in a lose hug when Harry responded with a smile and said, "Anytime you need me I'll be there to help you."

The two of them were lost in the other person's eyes as the two of them just stood there and stared at each other. There faces were about a foot apart and slowly got closer and the foot difference became inches. The inches slowly became centimeters. Ginny's mind was racing, 'what is about to happen? Is Harry about to kiss me? Am I going to finally kiss him? It's been so long, I've waited for so long. It's just him and me. Does he feel the same way as I feel about him?' Her mind continued to race with other questions and concerns as their lips came from centimeters to millimeters apart.

Their lips were about to touch when they heard Ron yelling down into the trunk, "Harry, Ginny, it's time to go!"

The two of them snapped back to reality and pulled away from each other with Ginny thinking, 'I'm going to get that git of a brother for doing that. I almost got Harry.'

Harry on the other hand was relieved that Ron interrupted and thought, 'The admirer.'

Harry yelled back to Ron, "Alright Ron! We're just finishing up! We'll be up in a minute!" He turned to Ginny held out his hand for her to take and asked, "Shall we?"

Ginny took his hand and the two of them made there way back out to meet the rest of their group waiting in their private common room. The group waited for everybody to assemble and made there way to the front gates of Hogwarts. There they met up with the rest of the school as everybody awaited the arrival of Durmstrang.

Moments later Durmstrang arrived without the ship that they showed up with last time. They arrived with a quick pop as they portkeyed in formation. When the gates to the entrance of Hogwarts were open there were seven rows of students wearing black battle robes with the Durmstrang crest over their left arm and the Bulgarian coat of arms over their right arm. In the front of each row was a gonfalon bearer that was holding a gonfalon with the Durmstrang crest on it and an insignia at the lower right corner that represented the year for which that gonfalon belonged to. In front of the seven rows of students were a row of ten teachers lined up perpendicular to the students behind them with ten students in front of each teacher who was the Durmstrang team that Hogwarts was going to compete against.

The Headmaster of Durmstrang came forward and was greeted by Professor Dumbledore. The two of them were speaking to each other and appeared to be getting along with one another even though nobody could hear what was going on except for the two smiling men.

It looked like all of Durmstrang showed up this time as they were standing at attention awaiting the order to move like they were in the military. If anything it looked like they showed up ready to fight and enter a war like any trained soldier with years of training. All of them showed blank expressions. Dumbledore turned around and nodded to McGonagall who gave the order for all the Hogwarts students to line up on the right side in a long row starting from the front gates all the way to the entrance to the Great Hall. All of the Hogwarts stayed with their respective houses and the order started with Slytherin,

Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, than Gryffindor who were the closest to the Great Hall.

The Headmaster of Durmstrang turned around and gave a nod to his students and starting with the first years, they followed their respective rows lead by their gonfalon and formed a single line opposite that of the Hogwarts students in the hallways. When they were done reaching there spots they turned to face their counterparts from Hogwarts while the two sides scowled at each other.

The teachers from Durmstrang walked in ahead of everybody else and joined the remaining Hogwarts professors in the Great Hall at the Head Table. The Great Hall looked like it doubled in size as four more long tables were added to the ones of the four houses of Hogwarts. The Hogwarts tables were lined on the right side in the same order as before with their house banners floating proudly above the respective tables with every other banner as the Hogwarts banner.

On the other side of the Great Hall were four tables for Durmstrang and above each table were banners that were representative of each gonfalon that the students were carrying alternating banners between each year and the Durmstrang Crest as the students from Durmstrang were not divided by their respective years while at Hogwarts. The Durmstrang professors were on the left side of the Head table which was extended to accommodate the Durmstrang faculty while the Hogwarts professors were gathered on the right side of the table.

All of the professors were standing behind their respective seats waiting for the arrival of the students and Headmasters. McGonagall made her way to the entrance of the Great Hall and called the two schools to enter and take there respective seats. The Durmstrang students sat at the closest available seats and filed in behind each other with the Gonfalon seated behind the tables against the wall. The Hogwarts students went to their respective house seats. Everybody sat and waited for all the students to gather while the professors remained standing awaiting the arrival of the two teams and the Headmasters.

The two competing teams walked in two straight lines behind their respective Headmasters. To Harry something didn't feel right as he had his right hand over his holly wand the entire time which went noticed by everybody else from the Hogwarts team and they also had their hands in their pockets hanging onto their wands. The two groups made there way through the now empty corridors and into the Great Hall. Upon their arrival cheers erupted from the Hogwarts side of the room as they chanted out support for their team which resulted in Durmstrang cheering for their side.

For the first time that night, Durmstrang did not look like a military but a group of students just like those from Hogwarts although they were a bit more reserved about the cheering than the Hogwarts students were. The Headmasters made there way around the Head Table to their respective seats at the middle of the table while motioning for the students that were competing to stand in a row shoulder to shoulder in front of the Head Table and facing the rest of the school.

Dumbledore motioned for the Durmstrang Headmaster to take a seat and after he did so the rest of the faculty from both schools took their respective seats. He raised his hands to calm the students and call for order. Shortly after, the students became quiet and took their seats with the only ones left standing are the two teams representing their schools.

Dumbledore said, "Thank you and I wish to express a warm welcome to the faculty and students from Durmstrang to Hogwarts and hope that you have a pleasant time on your visit."

After finishing what he said, the Hogwarts side of the room clapped politely to welcome there guests. After the clapping died down, Dumbledore continued on by saying, "Unlike during the tri-wizard tournament, Durmstrang will not be staying on Hogwarts grounds during the year due to both security concerns from both schools. They will be staying in Bulgaria until the day of the respective challenges."

Dumbledore waited for the Headmaster from Durmstrang to nod his agreement. He continued on by saying, "I would like to introduce everybody to the Headmaster from Durmstrang, Headmaster

Lechkov. He is in his first year as the Headmaster of Durmstrang after being appointed recently by the Bulgarian Ministry of Magic."

The entire hall gave another polite clap to welcome the Headmaster to Hogwarts. Dumbledore sat down as Lechkov stood up. Lechkov said in a heavy accent with an Eastern European accent, "Thank you Headmaster Dumbledore for your warm reception. I would like to express my gratitude to Headmaster Dumbledore, the faculty of Hogwarts, and the students for the welcome."

After he said that there was another round of clapping as Headmaster Lechkov sat back down. Dumbledore stood back up and said, "I would like to introduce everybody to the two teams that will be representing Hogwarts and Durmstrang in the competitions over the next few months."

There were clapping and cheering going on from the two sides of the Great Hall for their respective teams. Most of the people standing were blushing and happy from the support that they were getting from their respective schools while Harry was thinking, 'This is how it should be. The students and teachers should be cheering and not worrying about a war. This is how school and life should be like. People should be cheering for a side instead of dying for a side.' With that thought his eyes and Cho Chang's eyes were locked on each other as if they were thinking the same thing. The two nodded to each other as if they knew what the other person was thinking and agreed with them.

Dumbledore motioned for the two teams to go take there seats. The Hogwarts teams headed back to their house tables while the Durmstrang team took the first available seat to them. After they took their seats, Dumbledore said, "Let these competitions be fair and peaceful for both schools. I hope that everybody enjoy these days of peace that are few and far between since the war has started."

Everybody seemed to agree with this and several nodded there agreements from both sides of the Great Hall including the Head Table. After the short pause, Dumbledore said, "With these last words let the competition begin." He paused, raised both his hands as food started to appear on all of the tables and said, "Tuck in."

The feast was a happy affair as everybody got more than enough to eat with both food traditional to England and Bulgaria on all of the tables. There were some reluctance at first to eat the other cultures cuisine but that soon disappeared as a few people were brave enough to try what the other culture had to offer and everybody was happy that they tried out all the food.

After the feast was over, Dumbledore stood up and announced, "Tomorrow will be the first day of competition starting with the educational task. This task will be conducted here in the Great Hall and all is welcome to watch as classes are cancelled for tomorrow."

There were cheering from the Hogwarts students as the Bulgarian students were envious that they had no classes tomorrow. Dumbledore than continued on by saying, "Headmaster Lechkov has already told me that Durmstrang's classes are canceled for tomorrow also so that everybody can come and watch the first task."

On that note the rest of the Great Hall erupted with clapping as everybody seemed to be happy that they would be able to go and see this competition take place. After much cheering from both sides, Dumbledore raised his hands to calm everybody down. After the Great Hall became quiet once again, Lechkov stood up beside Dumbledore and said, "It's time for us to take our leave for tonight. We will return tomorrow morning for breakfast." He turned to face Dumbledore and said, "Thank you for your hospitality."

Dumbledore nodded his return. The students and faculty from Durmstrang stood up and all of them clutched a necklace that nobody seemed to notice that they were wearing before. With a quick flash, all of them disappeared and the Great Hall was half empty again with only those from Hogwarts present. After Durmstrang disappeared, Dumbledore said, "It's getting late now. So will prefects lead all the students back to their houses?"

Everybody went back to their houses with little complaint. Harry and his friends made it back to there suite. When they got back, Hermione said, "I think that we should cram tonight so we will be ready by tomorrow."

Kayla and Ginny groaned at spending the rest of the night studying for they were tired of it since they were spending the last few weeks doing nothing but studying with the occasional quidditch practice. Ron responded, "Hermione, I think that you all should take the night off and just rest. We don't know what's going to be covered and have been training non stop for the last few weeks so why not get a good nights rest before tomorrow."

Hermione was getting ready to respond when Harry interjected, "I think that Ron might be right on this one Hermione. You all should get some rest because if you don't get some sleep than you all won't be able to think straight tomorrow."

Kayla, Ginny, and Luna had hopeful looks in there eyes that Hermione would concede while Ron was relieved that Harry decided to back him up on this issue. Hermione thought about it for a minute than said, "I guess you're right. I'll just get some reading done before I go to sleep though just to brush up on a few things." She turned to face Harry and asked, "Harry, are you going to be using your trunk tonight?"

Harry thought about it for a moment than said, "I wasn't going to do anything of importance. Why don't you go ahead and use it. I'll just sleep tonight on the bed in the boys' room."

Hermione said, "Thanks." She than ran off to her room to get some books and walked over to the boys' room than down to Harry's library to read. Everybody else seemed happy that there wasn't going to be another fight between Hermione and Ron plus the added benefit of not being forced to study all night.

Luna spent the rest of the night reading another edition of the Quibbler which she held upside down to read. Neville and Kayla were talking to each other in front of the fireplace about different types of plants and medicines used in America which Neville found fascinating. Ron and Harry were playing several games of wizards chess which Harry lost every game even with the help he was getting from Ginny who was watching the two of them play.

They trickled off one by one to go to sleep with the girls going to sleep first because they were going to be competing the next day. Even Hermione didn't stay up as late as she usually does and followed Harry's advice of getting a good night's sleep.

That night, Harry was the last person to go to sleep. Before he was even able to finish getting changed, he could hear Ron's snoring and saw that Neville already had his bed curtains pulled signaling that he was already asleep.

Harry was having a dreamless sleep until all of a sudden he found himself standing in the middle of a thick fog in the middle of what looked like a field because he couldn't see very far in the fog. He walked around and it seemed like he was getting no where until he heard some voices calling out his name.

Harry called out, "Who's there?"

This continued on for a few more minutes until the fog cleared and before Harry stood his parents and Sirius looking very disappointed at him. Harry was surprised; he didn't have this dream since the day he left the Dursley's house. Harry asked, "What's going on here?"

Sirius walked over to him and pulled out what looked like a wand which prompted his dad and mom to pull out their wands. Sirius said, "We're disappointed in you Harry. We thought that you wanted to be with us, why didn't you come to join us? Who really cares about those that are alive when you're dead?"

Harry said, "I do want to be with you. Why do you want me to die so quickly?" He extended his hand to see if what he was seeing was real.

Lily said, "You should be here with us Harry. You should be with your family. But don't worry, we'll fix this. We'll end this now." The three of them pointed their wands at Harry and said, "Avada Kedavra!"

The green light sped towards Harry but before he was hit by the three spells, he woke up in a pool of sweat with Ron, Neville, Tonks, and Remus over him. He was in a daze and couldn't make out what was going on or what everybody was saying. All he felt was his scar

burning when he reached up to soothe the pain with his hand, he felt something wet and when he lowered his hands so that he could see his hands, Harry saw that his hands were covered in blood.

Madame Pomfrey came rushing into the room followed by Dumbledore and McGonagall who had worried expressions on their faces. Pomfrey raised her wand and muttered a few incantations that nobody could make out what she was saying while small soft glows erupted at the end of her wand and slowly trickled over Harry's body like drops of water. When she finished what she was doing, Harry managed to put on his glasses and regain enough consciousness to make out what everybody was saying.

Pomfrey said, "Harry has been poisoned." There were gasps from a few people.

Remus then asked, "Is he going to be fine?"

Madame Pomfrey said, "Yes he will be good as new in a few hours. His body is doing a good job of fighting off the poison. I suspect that the phoenix tears that entered his system a few years ago in the Chamber of Secrets is helping him right now. The poison wasn't fatal in the first place. He would have recovered on his own though I'm not sure how long it will last but the tears seem to be doing their job by speeding up the recovery. This poison only weakened his mind but he should be fine soon. I would guess that somebody hexed something that he was eating."

A few people let out a sigh of relief as Madame Pomfrey finished her explanations. Harry asked, "What happened?"

Ron said, "We heard you tossing and turning and talking in your sleep. Neville and I woke up at the same time and went over to wake you up but when we got to your bed we saw you sweating a lot and blood coming from your scar. So I tried to wake you up while Neville went to go get help."

Neville continued on where Ron let off and said, "I ran into Professor Lupin doing his rounds while trying to get help. He sent me to go get Professor Dumbledore and when I was making my way back, I ran

into Professor Tonks who was out looking for Professor Lupin. Shortly after we arrived you woke up."

Harry nodded. Remus asked, "Harry, what happened in your dream?"

Harry thought about telling everybody in the room because he wasn't sure if the spy was in the room with them at the time. He felt some light mental probing but couldn't really identify who it was or if it was really probing but he managed to erect his mental barriers to block it out quickly. He decided to just tell them as he couldn't hide his dream so he told them what he was dreaming. When he finished everybody was quiet thinking about what could be going on.

Tonks interrupted the silence by saying, "I'll let the girls know that Harry's fine." She turned to leave as Ron explained that the girls heard all the commotion but told to wait outside the room.

Harry decided to wait a few hours before attempting to go to sleep because he wanted to make sure the poison was going to wear off before attempting sleep again even though Madame Pomfrey gave him some dreamless sleep draught. Harry told everybody else to go to sleep and everybody else reluctantly left to go back to sleep with the exception of Ginny.

Everybody went back to sleep around one in the morning with the exception of Harry and Ginny who spent the time awake just talking to each other while sitting on the ground in front of the fireplace. The two of them ended up falling asleep in the common room in front of the fireplace.

Remus and Tonks came back to check up on him one final time but when they saw the two of them peacefully sleeping, Remus conjured a blanket and wrapped the two of them in the blanket and left them for the night.

A/N: Now to all of my reviewers since my last post. After reading a few of the reviews I'm intrigued as to who you all think is the spy and who is Ginny's admirer so if you want to take a guess than add it to your reviews. Oh yeah, who do you all think is the person that poisoned Harry?

Dancerrdw: Thank you and I'll keep updating.

Nightwing 509: Thank you and there will be more surprises to come with the DA and the spy.

David M. Potter: Thank you and don't worry only a few more chapters and Harry and Ginny will get together.

JPx: Thank you and I agree that the flashback was a bit out of place but I couldn't figure out a better way to lead into the flashback because I needed a foundation for Harry to start the DA and let Kayla further into the DA. I will try working on their thoughts to make it flow better because it will become important later on to understand the character's motives. Oh and sorry about the 'than' and 'then' stuff because I always over look those and will try to pay more attention to it.

Rivenn: Thank you and I gurantee that so far the spy if there really is one is going to be a surprise.

Bandgsecurtiyaw: Thank you and I'll try to keep up the story.

IamSiriusgrl: Thank you and I guess I did overlook the keeping an eye out for the spy part. I will try to be clearer on it but until the spy is found though, Harry is a bit more alert and his anger is building at the same time as things slowly build up. If I do fail to mention it though, Harry is taking in everything slowly to weed out the spy if possible.

Whitefish: Thank you. Harry and Ginny will be getting together soon along with the development of Harry's political side and leadership position.

Lonsome-love: Thank you and I agree that the first kiss is going to be important. I'm trying to work on that right now to make it memorable.

BeautifulLady: Thank you. You are very close on the spy bit but won't say more about it. Harry is stronger than what he is letting on and the action will pick up soon once the foundations for the climax is set.

JohnnyEmo: Thank you and no problem on the response. I always try to respond to reviews but not let much of the story get told.

Shadowssongs: Thank you for your praise and honored that you would compare me to JKR. I'm pacing the updates right now just in case I get writers block and there won't be an unusually long wait for an update. I have a general outline that I'm using but I didn't want to take the chance of being unable to expand on the outline.

Chapter 16

The Educational Test

Harry woke up early the next morning while still feeling a little tired. It was about five in the morning which meant he only had a few hours of sleep but his body just seemed to naturally wake up at that time now ever since he was able to get himself in rhythm with his personal training. At first he was startled to see his arms wrapped around Ginny than instantly the events of last night came back into his mind. He slowly pulled his arms away from her and lowered her back to the ground so not to disturb her sleep too much.

Harry went through his regular routine of getting ready in the morning and when he made it out to the quidditch pitch for some exercise, he decided to just take the day off and relax to give his body more time to recover. He ended up sitting in one of the benches in the stands at the quidditch pitch. He was scratching Blaze behind the ears while staring aimlessly into the forbidden forest thinking, ‘When did I get poisoned last night? I don’t remember ever having exposed myself openly to an attack and I doubt that the house elves would poison me. Who would want to poison me? Is it somebody from Slytherin when all of my attention was over with Durmstrang? Is it from Durmstrang, and they wanted to sabotage Hogwarts? Maybe there’s a traitor around me somewhere? How is it that the poison did not affect me for very long? I wonder how long the Phoenix tears will stay in my system and protect me. Are there any other students that were poisoned outside of me? What was the poison that they tried to attack me with? I need some answers.’

With that last thought, Harry decided to go see Madame Pomfrey to find out more about the poison. It was only six in the morning and he was hoping that she was already awake not wanting to get on the bad side of the lady that has healed him more times than he cared to count. Harry knocked on the door to the hospital wing and heard Madame Pomfrey say, “Come in.”

Harry proceeded in and saw the door to Madame Pomfrey’s office open so he walked in to find her at her desk with a few books open that all appear to be medical reference books from what Harry could tell. Harry said, “Good morning, Madame Pomfrey.”

Madame Pomfrey replied in a tired voice, “Morning Mr. Potter, how are you feeling this morning?”

Harry said, “I’m feeling better, as a matter of fact I feel as if there’s nothing wrong with me other than a bit sleep deprived but that’s just because I’m used to waking up this early.”

“That’s good. I’m also an early riser and decided to get some more details on what poisoned you. I’m assuming that is why you are here this morning.”

“Yes ma’am. I was wondering if you could tell me more about what happened last night.”

Madame Pomfrey gestured to a seat at the side of her desk for Harry to take a seat. Harry sat down as Madame Pomfrey closed a few of the opened books after book marking the pages than said, “I believe that what poisoned you was what we call a Memory Reduction Draught.”

She saw the confused expression on Harry’s face than continued on saying, “The Memory Reduction Draught is designed to weaken a person’s mental defenses for a short period of time.”

Harry asked, “Why would somebody use that potion?”

She responded, “The potion was created about one hundred years ago to help break into the minds of witches and wizards who are very proficient in Occlumency. It was used when Veritaserum were in its testing phase. They used this potion with the help of Legilimency to determine if somebody is telling the truth and find secrets from opposing sides.”

“I’ve never heard of it before. Why not continue to use this potion instead of developing Veritaserum?”

“Legilimency is a very difficult skill to master and the development of Veritaserum made it easier for everybody to determine what is truth and what is no.” She paused for a moment than continued on by

saying, “I’m not surprised that you haven’t heard of it because it is not commonly used. Even if it were used, most people wouldn’t know it unless somebody tried Legilimency on them.”

“Are there any side effects of the potion?”

“There really aren’t any side effects that are known other than a weakened mind.”

“How is it that I had such a bad reaction to it?”

A voice that Harry recognized behind him said, “I think that I can answer that Harry.”

Harry’s eyes closed briefly as he tried to keep his temper from flaring, Harry said, “Good morning Headmaster.”

Harry must have managed to control his voice because nobody reacted to what Harry just said. Dumbledore said, “Good morning Poppy. Good morning Harry.”

Madame Pomfrey said, “Good morning Albus, what brings you here this morning?”

Dumbledore said, “I was looking for Harry and had the feeling that he would come here to ask you about what happened last night.”

Madame Pomfrey asked, “Why do you think that he would come to see me? From my understanding, he has always gone to you in the past to seek advice or guidance.”

Dumbledore sighed and said, “I believe that things will never be the same between Harry and me.” He paused to look at Harry and said, “I thought that things were clearing up between us but I see that there is much work to mend our relationship. Plus, you are more than capable to advise Harry on matters of health and medicine.”

Harry just stared and Dumbledore the entire time Pomfrey and the Headmaster were talking. He was thinking, ‘There is much to do but I will not divulge anything privileged with you anytime soon

Headmaster until I know that I can trust you again.' When Dumbledore finished talking, Madame Pomfrey was about to ask a question that Harry felt was going to bring the rift between Harry and Dumbledore in the open so Harry interrupted her and asked, "Sorry for the interruption but you were going to tell us why I had a bad reaction to the potion, Headmaster."

Madame Pomfrey was about to say something about Harry's interruption but the Headmaster raised a hand slightly to quiet her than he said, "Harry, based on what you told me last night. I believe that while your mind was weakened last night, Voldemort managed to break into your mind and plant the nightmare in you. It was either that or your Occlumency shields managed to block out all nightmares that naturally occurred but I believe the first made much more sense considering your history with everybody involved."

Harry was thinking, 'That makes sense if I really think about it. I guess my parents wouldn't want me dead if they did they had sixteen years of trying to get me to do that. I know that Sirius wouldn't want me to do that either but who broke my defenses. Madame Pomfrey said it was a draught than it struck him.' Harry turned to Madame Pomfrey and said, "Madame Pomfrey, I didn't drink anything last night other than the pumpkin juice that was served. To think of it, I didn't drink much of that either, how much do you have to take in order to be affected?"

Madame Pomfrey thought about it for a second than said, "Well, although it is called a draught, you don't have to take it by drinking. This potion only needs a few drops into a drink or can be added when food is prepared. It is odorless, colorless, and tasteless so you wouldn't know if there was anything out of the ordinary."

Harry asked, "Is there a way to detect it?"

Poppy nodded and said, "There is a simple spell that you can use to detect if there are any potions or poisons added to your food or drink. You hold your wand over your food or drink and say 'Posinium Revelus.' If a faint purple glow starts to appear halfway between the wand and the food than there is some kind of potion added to your food or drink. If a faint yellow glow shows up than there is a deadly

poison in your food. If there is no color that show up within three seconds of saying the charm than nothing was added to your food or drink.”

Harry whispered, “Posinium Revelus,” and repeated it a few times to commit it to memory.

Madame Pomfrey interrupted Harry’s repetition by asking, “Harry, do you know who might have done this to you?”

Harry thought about it for a moment than said, “I’m not sure. I was either with my team or with my friends the entire time. I don’t think that anybody had the chance unless it happened before yesterday. But I can say this, when I find out who is responsible, there will be hell to pay.”

Professor Dumbledore said, “I think its time for you to get ready for today. Harry, you can come back later when Madame Pomfrey has more time but I need to talk to Madame Pomfrey for now.”

Harry thanked Madame Pomfrey for answering the questions that he had and bid both her and Professor Dumbledore bye before he left to go back to his trunk to get ready for the day. Harry didn’t feel like running into anybody because he wasn’t sure about how far the story of what happened last night has gone. Instead, he went to the nearest broom closet, closed the door, locked it, and used his portkey to appear in his trunk.

Harry took a shower and got dressed. He walked around his trunk to make sure everything was in order and confirmed that the lid to his trunk was locked so nobody could come down unannounced. Harry used his portkey to return to the broom closet that he used earlier than proceeded over to the Great Hall for breakfast which was well underway. Upon his arrival, he noticed that Durmstrang had already arrived and everybody seemed to be busy eating or talking to somebody even the Head Table seemed to be filled with every professor. He saw his team and friends sitting together at the far end of the Gryffindor table and made his way towards them.

Hermione was the first one to notice his arrival and nervously asked, "How are you Harry? Are you feeling better today? We didn't see you this morning and thought you left for breakfast before the rest of us were up."

Harry sat down between Ginny and Kayla and said, "I'm fine. I was just walking around that's all." Harry looked at the food and decided to not use the charm that he just learned because the food was coming from the same batch of plates that his team was eating from when he arrived. He started to grab some toast, spoonfuls of eggs, and a few slices of bacon. He took a few bites and noticed that the members that were going to compete today were quiet and was either not eating or just poking at their food. Harry looked at them and said, "Guys, you're going to do fine. Don't worry about it. You all should eat because it will make it easier to think."

A few of his teammates gave him some grateful smiles and managed to eat some breakfast. Harry saw that Ginny still wasn't eating and asked her, "Gin, why aren't you eating?"

Ginny stopped playing with her food and said, "I guess I'm just nervous and not to mention what happened last night is still on my mind."

Harry looked at her closely as everybody stopped to stare at the two of them. They were also thinking the same thing and wanted to find out if Harry knew anything new. Harry was oblivious to everybody else as all of his attention was on Ginny. He subconsciously took Ginny's hands that were now under the table and held it down to stop her from fidgeting. The two of them looked at each other and he said, "There's nothing to worry about. What happened yesterday was harmless and I went to talk to Madame Pomfrey this morning about it already. She said that there's nothing to worry about. Just focus on the task today and if you have any questions, I'll answer them tonight."

Ginny let out a sigh of relief and was able to calm down a great deal. She gave a grateful smile and squeezed his hand to show that she understood. She turned to look at her food and Harry said, "What is it

that you want to eat or..." He smiled and said, "Or do you want me to feed you?"

Ginny gave a mischievous smile than said, "I think that I would prefer that you feed me."

Harry didn't expect that answer but decided to play along so he picked up her butter knife and spread some butter on her toast just like how he always seen her do. Everybody looked what the two of them were doing at a loss for words. They have never seen Harry act like this before. Harry finished buttering the toast raised it to Ginny's mouth which she opened up and took a bite. After eating the rest of the toast as Harry fed it to her, Ginny was happier. The two of them were acting on impulse and letting their subconscious nature taking control that they didn't realize all the people around them were staring at them openly flirting with one another.

Ron interrupted them by saying, "What do you think you're doing with my sister?"

This snapped the two of them back to reality and Harry asked, "Huh?" He was still confused what was going on but was saved from any further explanation with the sound of somebody tapping a goblet on its side from the Head Table.

Dumbledore stood up and said, "Since we are now done with breakfast. Will the two teams representing Durmstrang and Hogwarts please enter the room to my right." Dumbledore motioned to the door that Harry went through a few years before for the Tri-wizard tournament. He continued on by saying, "Will everybody else please step outside for a moment so the Great hall can be prepared for today's challenge."

The Gryffindors led by Neville wished the team good luck and were followed by the Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs. The Slytherins were the first out of the Great Hall. After receiving encouragement from the three houses, the team made there way into the side room that was mentioned earlier.

The room had two rows of tables facing each other with ten seats lined up on the outside of the table and faced the middle of the room. There was a small pedestal that was directly in front of the large fireplace in the room. The two teams sat opposite of each other with McGonagall, Flitwick, Lupin, Tonks, and Sprout standing behind them.

Durmstrang had a team of six boys and four girls. Their appearance was as diverse as the Hogwarts team with varying height, eye and hair color, plus they didn't seem as intimidating when not surrounded by their schoolmates. There were also five professors standing behind them at attention. The room was quiet as everybody seemed either nervous or just staring at different parts of the room trying not to make eye contact with anybody by mistake.

Harry decided to stand up as everybody in the room stared at him. He walked over to the Bulgarian side of the room to the person closest to him who was a girl that was sitting closest to the pedestal and fireplace. When Harry reached her, he extended his hand and said, "Hi, I'm Harry, Harry Potter."

The pretty brunette was startled by what Harry was doing than stood up and shook his hand and said in a heavy Eastern European accent, "Hello, my name is Petia Levski." She paused as if she was contemplating a way to say what she wanted than said, "I have heard of you before from Viktor Krum. He says you're a good man, he said that it was a shame of what your ministry and newspaper said about you last year." She paused with the same expression as earlier that she had when she was thinking than said, "It's an honor to finally meet you. Although you are not as popular in Bulgaria as you are here in England, we do know of your reputation and what Viktor says only confirms that you're a good man."

Harry bowed his head briefly and said, "Thank you Petia. I hope we're able to get to know each other better." He paused for a moment than asked, "How do you know Viktor, I thought he graduated already?"

Petia said, "He did graduate, the two of us write to each other often because he is a close friend of mine."

Harry nodded and said, "I haven't heard from him for some time. How is he doing?"

Petia said, "He is doing well. Viktor still plays for Bulgaria and is currently considering playing for the Cannons."

Right when she said Cannons, Ron jumped up and asked, "Viktor Krum is going to get traded to the Cannons?"

Petia looked over at him and said, "Yes, I believe that he is considering it saying something like being part of a team that is rebuilding from the ground up and being able to help make it happen."

Ron was excited; he was jumping up and down saying, "See Harry? I told you that the Cannons were going to go all the way. I knew that Krum was a good person."

With that statement, Harry, Hermione, and Ginny all rolled their eyes because Ron always talked bad about Viktor ever since he escorted Hermione to the Yule Ball during their fourth year. With the conversation between Petia and Harry along with Ron's outburst, the tension in the room broke and everybody started talking to each other. The two teams got up and met each other and shook hands with the professors also talking to the professors from the other school.

The Bulgarian team seemed eager to finally meet Harry Potter, the boy that defeated Viktor Krum when he was fourteen and saved the Wizarding World when he was one.

The four girls from Durmstrang seemed to be just as infatuated with Harry as the girls from Hogwarts but not because of his fame but just physical attraction. This did not go unnoticed by Ginny who stood by Harry as he was talking to the girls from Durmstrang.

Everybody in the room with the exception of Harry, Ginny, and the four girls from Durmstrang was watching what was going on around Harry. The girls seemed to have engaged in an unspoken war with Durmstrang going up against Ginny for Harry's attention. Even the faculty from Durmstrang found this amusing and by the looks of how

Ginny is so protective of Harry knew that the girls from their school did not have a chance at winning Harry.

After about an hour of getting to know each other, the room went quiet again as the entrance to the room opened up again to reveal Professor Dumbledore and Headmaster Lechkov coming into the room followed in by Madame Maxine. Madame Maxine is the Headmistress from Beauxbaton which was the third school that participated in the tri-wizard tournament.

Everybody went back to where they were sitting before Harry walked over to Petia to talk. The Headmasters and Headmistress walked behind the podium with Dumbledore in the middle. Dumbledore said, "Welcome everyone. I would like to introduce Madame Maxine from Beauxbaton who will be serving as our impartial judge in this competition." He gestured over to where the Headmistress was standing. She bowed slightly at her introduction as everybody else in the room also bowed slightly to acknowledge and welcome her. Dumbledore went on to say, "If there is a dispute between who is right or wrong concerning any of these challenges than she will determine what the outcome will be. Due to her participation and per her request, the students from Beauxbaton will also be here to watch these challenges. They will not compete but remain spectators like the rest of your schoolmates. Are there any questions?"

Nobody said anything and Dumbledore stepped back as Madame Maxine stepped forward to where Dumbledore just stood. In her French accent she said, "Welcome. I am now going to fill you in on the details of the first challenge. Five people from each team will represent their school. The challenge will fall on two parts. The first part is a trivia competition that will test your knowledge in the fields that will be announced later on. The competitors will be holding onto these buzzers behind your podium. You will choose a category and level of difficulty. The more difficult the question the more points you will receive. The points range from ten to fifty depending on difficulty. Once a question is asked from a category and a certain level of difficulty than that option will no longer be available. For example, if you were to choose Charms for thirty than once that question is read, it is no longer available for the rest of the competition once the correct answer is given. If the wrong answer is given than the opposing team

has a chance to answer the question. Should you give the wrong answer than points will be deducted from your team score. All scores are team scores. Are there any questions?"

Hermione was thinking that this sounded similar to a muggle game show called Jeopardy but simplified and more straightforward. Everybody seemed to understand what the Headmistress was saying because nobody asked any questions.

Madame Maxine continued on by saying, "The second part of the competition is a practical. There will be five subsections to the practical part of the challenge. Only one person from the team will compete in each section and you can only compete once therefore everybody will be participating. These categories will be announced later on also. To make it easier for both teams and to reduce any unfair advantage, I will be administering the challenge and there will be an option to wear a charmed ear piece which will instantly translate what it is that I'm saying. I will be reading the questions in French. Are there any questions?"

Harry raised his hand and asked, "What do the people who don't compete do?"

Maxine said, "You will be sitting with the rest of your schoolmates. Are there any other questions?"

Nobody said anything than she said, "If you will all follow me, we will start this competition. When we enter the Great Hall please proceed to go to your spots which will have your names on them. Those not competing will join their schools. Good luck to both teams and let's have a fair and fun time."

The group followed Madame Maxine into the Great Hall which didn't look anything like it did before. There were three large sections of Stadium style seating that formed three sides of a square and an open area with a large shiny white board forming the fourth side. The ceiling of the Great Hall looked like it grew taller as the scene from the outdoors showed through. Walking in from Harry's point of view, the left side of the hall was filled with Hogwarts students and what looked like a few reporters from England. The right side stadium

seating was filled with Durmstrang and a few reporters from Bulgaria. The center seating area was filled with Beauxbaton and reporters from the rest of the Wizarding World. On the ground level, there were ten podiums, with two rows of podiums. The two rows of podiums faced each other with the room divided into the Hogwarts and Durmstrang. The ten students competing took their spots as everybody else joined their classmates.

The Great Hall was filled with the sound of cheering for the two schools. Headmaster Lechkov and Headmaster Dumbledore took seats to the right and left of the podium respectively. Madame Maxine stood behind the podium and raised her hands to call for silence which quickly followed.

Madame Maxine welcomed everybody and explained the rules of the Educational Challenge to everybody in the stands and the reporters. She told them the same thing that she briefed the teams on. She turned around and tapped her wand on the white board and the board divided into three separate areas. When facing the board from the stands, the left side of the board had the word 'Durmstrang' on it with the Durmstrang Crest below it. There was a box with a zero in it which is for the score. The right side of the board had the word 'Hogwarts' on it with the Hogwarts Crest below it. There was also a box below it with a zero in it for the Hogwarts score. The middle of the board was blank.

Madame Maxine asked, "Are both teams ready?"

When she said that the middle of the white board broke into three horizontal parts. The top part translated what she said into English, the middle part translated it into Bulgarian, and the bottom most part showed what she said in French. Both teams nodded and Madame Maxine. She said, "Let's begin and now the categories are as follows." The middle section of the board that translated what she said disappeared and a game board popped up with the first row starting with the first column to the last column had Charms, Transfiguration, Potions, Healing, and History.

Since Durmstrang was visiting they got to choose the first question. Petia chose Charms for ten points. The middle part of the white board

disappeared and the translated section popped up with the English part saying, ‘what is the incantation for the charm used to levitate objects by use of wand movement swish and flick?’ while Madame Maxine read it in French.

Kayla’s buzzer and booth lit up than Madame Maxine acknowledged her. Kayla said, “Wingardium Leviosa!”

Madame Maxine said that it was correct and ten points showed up on the white board on the Hogwarts side. There were some clapping and cheering and Madame Maxine told everybody to hold their applause till the end of the first part of the Educational Challenge.

After the points showed up on the board, the middle section on the white board changed back to the game grid with the categories and point values. This continued on with much reaction from the spectators with excited whispers when somebody knew the answers or sympathetic awes when their team got a question wrong. The score was close and there was only one question left with fifty point value under history.

Hogwarts was leading by 100 points. Madame Maxine read, “Who is the murderer that betrayed James and Lily Potter to You-Know-Who?”

Almost instantly, Ginny’s booth lit up and she answered, “Peter Pettigrew.” There were cheers from most of the Hogwarts stand on getting the last question right but they were quickly quieted when Madame Maxine said that it was wrong. The Hogwarts team wanted to dispute this and Harry just froze when he heard the question and couldn’t believe that they would ask that.

Durmstrang buzzed in and answered Sirius Black which was accepted as the correct answer. Durmstrang was jumping up and down having tied the score with Hogwarts losing fifty points for the wrong answer and Durmstrang earning fifty points. Hermione wanted to launch a protest but Madame Maxine said that her decision was final. Harry just stood up and left the Great Hall, not wanting to hear more about this and not wanting to let his anger out on the people.

Later that day, Ginny found Harry sitting under an Oak tree by the lake. He was just sitting there and staring aimlessly. Ginny sat down next to him and the first words she said were, "I'm sorry Harry. We didn't win."

Harry turned to look at her and pulled her close to console her and said, "I'm sorry that I walked out on everybody like that."

She rested up against his shoulder and said, "We all understand why you left. As a matter of fact, the rest of us wanted to leave too but Professor Dumbledore and McGonagall made us stay. They said that you would be fine."

"Tell me what happened."

Ginny took a deep breathe than said, "Well, as you already know the trivia part of the challenge ended in a tie. The practical part was in five parts. The competitors were separated by a screen so there was no cheating. The first part was transfiguration which Kayla represented us in. The objective was to transfigure a feather into a weapon. Durmstrang transfigured the feather into a fairly nice silver broad sword that had some engravings on the blade. There was gold swirl that ran from the tip of the sword to its hilt. It looked really nice. Kayla transfigured the feather into a beautiful archery set. It was a shiny blue metallic single string bow with a quiver that had ten silver arrows that were tipped with gold arrow tips and tail. Each arrow had a name of one of the person that was on the Hogwarts team. The bow was engraved with the words Hogwarts on the inside closest to the string. It turned out that she broke the feather into smaller pieces so she could pull off the multiple pieces."

"It sounds really nice, I would have never thought of that."

"It was beautiful. I don't think that any of us could have created anything that beautiful. You should have seen McGonagall's face. She was actually smiling. Durmstrang received forty points for it and Kayla got us fifty points on it."

"What was the second practical?"

“Oh, the second practical was on potions. Hermione represented us in this because she was the most comfortable with potions. They had to brew some Pepper-up potion from scratch and from memory. The two of them were able to do it with no problems and both earned fifty points for the teams.”

“I guess there was really no doubt with Hermione working on that. What about the third practical?”

“Michael represented us in the third practical. It dealt with Astronomy. The ceiling of the Great Hall changed to look at the night sky and they had to identify all of the constellations in the sky. They had five minutes to identify all of them and write them on a parchment and turned it in to Madame Maxine. There were five and both of them had identified all of the constellations. In the end both of them received fifty points each.”

“Michael should be familiar with the stars considering how much time I’ve heard he spent in the Astronomy tower. At least now we know that he wasn’t snogging all the time up there. What about the next practical?”

“The next one dealt with Muggle Studies and Luna represented us on that task. There were five objects worth ten points each. You get five points for identifying what the object was and five points for giving the explanation on what it is used for. Surprisingly enough, both sides got everything right.”

“I guess that just leaves one event left and you the last one on our team.”

Ginny didn’t seem too happy when she said, “Yeah, the last challenged dealt with Charms. Specifically curse breaking but we didn’t know that until the Charms competition was about to begin. We each received a trunk and had to try to break through all the charms and curses protecting it. I knew that I should have paid more attention to what Bill says when he talks about curse breaking.” She paused a moment than looked out over the lake and said, “I broke through four of the charms and only had one left but the time ran out. Durmstrang

managed to break through the fifth charm when time was about to expire so they got fifty points and I got forty points.”

“Don’t feel bad, you didn’t lose, the final score would be a tie than, so we tied the first competition. From what I learned from the Durmstrang team all of them are either in the 6th or 7th year. They have been doing this longer than you and I didn’t focus enough on that with you.”

Harry gave her a hug and Ginny said, “Thanks Harry, I really needed that. Everybody else said the same thing but I guess I just wanted to hear it from you.”

Harry looked her in her eyes than said, “Ginny, you’ve always been strong and never needed anybody’s approval. I’m always behind you to support you so don’t ever worry about needing my approval because you will always have it.”

The moment was ruined when they heard Harry’s stomach growl because he hadn’t eaten since breakfast. Harry was embarrassed but Ginny just grabbed his hand and dragged him back to the Great Hall for dinner. Durmstrang did not stay for dinner and left after the last practical and the tie was announced. After dinner all of Hogwarts spent the rest of the night doing leisurely things with Harry and his friends joined by a few other people out having a pick-up game of quidditch. Hermione joined them but as usual just sat there and read while looking up occasionally to watch the game.

A/N: I know that some of you are a bit put off with the tie but it had to happen but at least you all know that Hogwarts should have won but was cheated out of their victory. The competition was also a bit shorter than expected because really couldn’t think of questions for each category but the single question that I needed to happen did happen. The majority of the guesses say that Harry is the admirer but in the next chapter I wonder if you all are going to continue with that idea when I give the next clue. The next competition is Quidditch and who do you think will win? Will it be the Harry Potter led squad or will it be the precision driven school that generated champions like Viktor Krum. Well, now to address by reviewers since my last post.

Nightwing 509: Thank you and the poisoning saga will continue. I gave another clue to who it might be so try to take another guess if you like.

IamSiriusgrl: Thank you and your guesses are really close.

Bandgsecurtiyaw: Thank you

Dancerrdw: Thank you and I'll try to continue the updating.

JPx: Thank you and Durmstrang's strive for perfection will play into the challenges. Sorry couldn't elaborate more on this competition though because I couldn't think of any more questions. The power struggle will develop to greater detail later on as soon as the love story is settled.

Rivenn: Thank and interesting answer. Especially since Dobby and Winky are not there to keep an eye on Harry's food.

YelloWitchGrl: Thank you and I understand your motivation for not trying hard to take a guess. I like to be surprised also.

Tanydwr: Yeah! My favorite crazy reviewer returns. Thank you and I hope you continue to like how the relationship development will continue. I also want a DA watch and you have hit Kayla right on the nose. She's here to train Harry in something that Hogwarts does not teach.

Annie: Thank you and the action starts up to a greater extent in a few chapters. I just need a few more chapters to lay the foundation for the "Fireworks" to follow. I hope that you can hang in there for now.

Lonsome-love: Thank you and I guess you're pretty confused about Kayla. Well, with the clue I gave at the beginning of the chapter about the poisoning, do you have a guess now?

Dragonstorm316: Thank you and I hope I didn't disappoint you on the first task but my real motivation was behind the quidditch and the dueling. This is a school so I figured this was required to show that

they learned something. Well, I can say the traitor will be revealed in a few chapters so hang in there.

Shadowssongs: Thank you and sorry for making you wait so long but the time available to write is dwindling down and I had to space out the update a bit. Once I get more time, hopefully during Spring Break I'll be able to get more up.

Gaul1: Thank you and hopefully the clue in this chapter helped with the poisoning.

yorkvillebird: Thank you.

Firebirdgs: Thank you and I appreciate constructive criticisms. Well, I know the story is a little slow on the action right now but the HG story needed to be set first in order for the second phase to begin. Don't worry, the action will return quickly after the HG issue is settled.

Frostinglolo: Thank you and I hope the clues in this chapter helps with the poison question.

Chapter 17

Hogsmeade

The Hogwarts team took the tie fairly well and after the explanation of what happened with the question about Sirius and Pettigrew during the Trivia part of the competition most of the school also took the news well. This was not the attitude shared amongst most of the Slytherins for they taunted the other houses saying that Hogwarts deserved not to win with the team of losers that were assembled.

The small group of Slytherins that were brave enough to not follow Malfoy later approached Harry about being in the DA after hearing rumors of what happened at the end of last year. They were not sure that the group was reformed but thought they might as well give it a try. There were only about five of them that were brave enough to defy Malfoy but this wasn't done out in the open. Amongst them was a Slytherin named Blaise Zambini. Blaise was the leader of the small group but they did not have enough knowledge, strength, and numbers to be openly against Voldemort in Slytherin House so they quietly went to meetings and passed information to Harry concerning anything about the Deatheaters.

Blaise was Harry's personal spy that nobody knew about including Hermione, Ron, Ginny, and Dumbledore. Harry decided that if there was somebody close to him that might be spying on him than it was time for him to spy on other people as well. They Slytherins that joined the DA went through rigorous tests to verify their intentions and loyalty that the other members were not forced to endure. There was little objection from the Slytherins because of the known relationship of their house to the rest of the school. They all passed and received the same watches that were worn by the rest of the DA.

During DA meetings the Slytherins mostly practiced amongst themselves because they were not openly accepted by the rest of the group yet. Harry occasionally joined them to help practice with them which they were happy about and others would be sent in once in a while to help like Hermione, Ginny, or Kayla. Harry sent them in knowing that the three of them could take care of themselves and was able to overlook the prejudices held by the other houses.

Time went by and the same routine set in for Harry with classes, the DA, personal training, practices with Kayla, and preparation for the next challenge which was quidditch. It was the end of October which brought with it the Halloween feast and memories of the past for Harry.

The Great Hall was crowded with students and teachers. There didn't seem to be a care in the world with all the laughter and joyful conversations between friends. The castle and to a larger extent the Great Hall was decorated with floating pumpkins, orange dimly lit candles, muggle themes of witches and wizards, scare crows, and lots of food. The feast was well underway when Dumbledore stood up after McGonagall tapped her goblet with her knife to draw the school's attention to the Head Table.

Dumbledore said, "I hope that everybody is having a good time tonight. I have one announcement to make before we call it an evening."

This was followed by many noticeable groans from students that didn't want the feast to end. The Headmaster waited for it to end than continued on saying, "I take it that you are having a good time but I believe that after this announcement many of you will want to leave and start planning. As everybody knows two years ago we had a Yule Ball that was a major success. Last year we weren't able to have many fun and leisure activities due to certain circumstances."

Everybody knew that Dumbledore was talking about Umbridge and the Ministry of Magic's interference in Hogwarts last year which resulted in nothing but headache and a growing dislike of the Minister and the Ministry of Magic. Dumbledore continued to say, "To make up for last year's event and hopefully to start an annual tradition at Hogwarts. I have the honor of announcing on behalf of the staff that this year we will be having a ball."

At those words, there were only two attitudes in the Great Hall and they were divided along gender lines. The girls started to whisper excitedly with one another while the boys were groaning and not looking forward to getting dressed up or the harder task of asking somebody to the ball.

Dumbledore raised his hands to quiet the students. He than said, "This will be a formal ball where it will be the responsibility of the gentlemen to ask the ladies. Dress robes will be required and only fourth years and up will be able to attend."

This resulted in more groans from the guys with the addition of some from the third years and below for being excluded in it. He continued on by saying, "The ball will take place at the end of November and if you have any more questions than please feel free to ask your Head of House about it." There was a short pause than he said, "Now since that is done will prefects please lead their houses back to the dormitories."

The excited talks concerning the Ball continued into the night. Harry was among the last people to enter the Gryffindor Common Room. He came into a room that was full of noise as a few girls were giving him some awkward looks that he was not comfortable with. His friends that came in at the same time as he did also noticed this but wanted to laugh at Harry's discomfort. They were stopped from even making the slightest comment of taunting Harry about all the looks he was getting from a stare by Ginny. Ginny did not like for a second what was going on and pulled Harry away to their own Common Room before the girls that were advancing on him made it any where near him.

The next morning had Harry waking up as usual far earlier than any of the other students. He continued with his usual physical fitness and came up to his trunk to get ready. Harry and his friends made their way down to the Great Hall together for breakfast. They were talking happily to each other with the guys talking about quidditch as usual while the girls were talking about the ball and what to wear and how to do their make-up. They were interrupted by a tall Asian dark haired girl.

She tapped Harry on the shoulder and he turned around to see Cho Chang, the girl that Harry had wanted to take to the ball two years ago and had dated last year. The entire group turned to her with Ginny with a mixture of discomfort, fear, and loathing at what the girl was about to do. Cho asked Harry, "Harry, can I talk to you alone for a minute?"

Cho backed up as Harry stood up and he said, "Sure, just lead the way."

Cho lead Harry out of the Great Hall and pulled him to the side just when the morning posts were arriving. She asked him, "I wanted to ask you if you were going to go to the ball?"

Harry told her politely, "I'm hoping to go to the ball but I've already asked somebody."

Cho's face fell a little when he said that, she said, "I guess I should have asked you earlier. I know that things between us did not end on a good note last year but I hope that we could continue to be friends. May I ask who it is that you asked to the ball?"

Harry thought about it for a second than said, "I don't want to tell people who I asked yet. Actually, I'm still waiting for an answer from her. I already attract enough attention as it is so I try not to make others feel uncomfortable because they already get hassled enough just for being around me. I hope that you understand."

With a hopeful expression, she asked, "I understand Harry. I know that I shouldn't say this but if she does not want to go than would you be willing to go with me?"

Harry smiled at her and said, "If she says no to my request than I would be honored to go with you but it wouldn't be fair to you to have you wait for an answer from the person that I asked."

She smiled than said, "That's fine with me. I don't mind waiting but I guess I'll go with whoever asks me when it comes down to two weeks before the ball. Hopefully, I'll get my answer from you by then."

Harry nodded than said, "I hope that I hear from her soon also. But I thought that you were going out with Michael Corner."

Cho's smile disappeared when she said, "We did go out at the end of last year but all he saw me for was a trophy so that didn't last too long."

They were interrupted by Hermione, Neville, Ron, and Kayla coming out of the Great Hall. Hermione approached them and said, "Sorry to interrupt guys but we have five minutes to get to our first class."

Harry and Cho gave each other their good-byes and walked off to their own respective classes. Harry's group made it to their class and Ron asked, "What did she want mate?"

Harry told him, "I'll tell you about it later. Class is about to start." With that remark, he received looks of approval from Hermione and Kayla with Ron feeling a bit put out and anxious about what Cho wanted.

Later in the day, on their way to lunch, they ran into Ginny who was walking with Colin and Luna. They were also on their way to the Great Hall for lunch. They approached Ginny, Luna, and Colin just when Colin asked Ginny, "So are you going to accept?"

Ron asked her, "What is Ginny going to accept?"

Colin was about to say something but Ginny blurted out with, "Nothing, it's just something I have to figure out."

Ron was thinking about anything that he might know of that would pose a question to Ginny than he said, "It's that letter isn't it. It's from your admirer. I knew it."

Ginny just shook her head and gave Colin a disapproving look. Colin took that as his cue to leave and ran off to find his brother to join him for lunch. She turned to Ron and said, "Yes, Ron it has to do with the admirer." She paused than quickly said, "And no, I'm not going to tell you what the letter said."

Ron wanted to say something else but Hermione interrupted him and the two of them had another row over Ginny's right to privacy. The fact that Ginny had shown Hermione and Kayla the letter during breakfast did not go over well with Ron either. Everybody else just fell a few steps back to let the arguing couple lead the way to the Great Hall plus avoid being dragged into the fight.

The fighting couple managed to end their bickering with lunch. Once Ron saw the food on the table he stopped arguing and piled it onto his plate. Hermione just shook her head than proceeded to fix herself a plate to eat. Everybody was enjoying their lunch with the occasional chat about nothing in particular when Harry leaned over to Ginny and whispered, "What is this about a letter earlier today?"

Ginny reached into her bag and pulled out a piece of parchment and discreetly handed it to Harry under the table while whispering, "It arrived this morning when you were dragged away by Cho." Ginny didn't seem too happy about using Cho's name but Harry just let it drop.

Harry slid back from the bench a little so he could have some room to read the letter in his lap. He looked around and noticed that Ron was still piling the food into his mouth so he took this opportunity to read the letter.

Ginny,

I hope that you are as excited about the announcement of the ball as I am. I know that you still don't know my identity but you now know that Harry knows me. Will you do me the honor of being my date to the ball? It would mean the world to me and I will reveal myself to you at the ball. If you are unsure if you can trust me or not just ask Harry. He will be able to tell you about me without revealing my identity. When you have your answer than please let Harry know and he will relay the message to me.

FireFlight

After reading the letter, Harry folded the parchment back up and handed it over to Ginny. He seemed hesitant at first but asked her, "Gin, do you have an answer?"

Ron's attention was brought back to what was going on between Harry and Ginny after Harry asked the question. Ron asked, "What answer?"

Harry was about to say something when Ginny interrupted with a straight face and said, "Harry wanted to know if I would give him a lock of my hair so he can add it to some polyjuice potion so he can see what it is like to be a girl."

Ron, Kayla, Neville, Hermione, and even Luna dropped their forks with their eyes going wide asked, "What?"

Harry decided to play along and said, "Well, Ginny and me were having this debate over if it was more difficult being a girl or a guy so we thought about using some polyjuice potion to test out who was right." He paused a moment than went on to say, "Plus I wanted to see what the female body was really like and I believe that your sister is a perfect example."

Ginny's eyes went a little wide when he added the last part but recovered quickly enough so nobody noticed except for Harry who felt her tense just slightly at what he was saying.

Harry continued on saying, "If you look at your sister, I think that you would agree that she has everything in the right place at just the right proportions." Ginny went a little red but kept her mouth shut because she knew that he was messing with Ron. What she didn't know was that Harry was getting ready to pull everybody into the little game that Ginny started.

Harry then said, "Well, at least that's what I believe but everybody's opinion is different. I guess Hermione rubbed off on me a bit because I wanted to make it a bit more scientific." He turned to Hermione, Kayla, and Luna to ask, "I was wondering if I would be able to get some hair samples from you ladies also. Considering everybody is a bit different I was wondering if I could take the potion to compare between you three and Ginny."

Luna was the first to catch on because Hermione and Kayla was still in shock about the question that he just asked. Luna pulled out a strand of her long hair and said in her usual airy voice, "Here Harry. I think that would be a good idea. Of course, I would like to turn into you also just to see what its like to be a guy. Just think of how many people would like to be Harry Potter for a day."

Harry picked up on her playful undertone that nobody else noticed and said, "You know Luna, if you want to be me for a day than you need more than just one strand of hair. I'll get you a few than that way we can switch one day. Would you like for me to brew the potion for you also?"

Luna said, "I would like to assist if you don't mind. That way I can see how to brew the potion myself."

Harry nodded to her than turned to Kayla and asked, "Kayla, what about you? Do you want to participate? I know that Hermione will."

Hermione spluttered at first than said, "Harry, you are not going to be turning into a girl. That's just not right."

Harry turned to Hermione than said, "If you don't want me to turn into you than can I look at you naked than?"

Hermione turned red and Ron stood up in the Great Hall and yelled, "Nobody is going to see Hermione naked except for me!"

This attracted the attention of everybody in the Great Hall as everybody went silent looking at the small group of Gryffindors. Harry decided to push it further and stood up to say, "Are you saying that you saw Hermione naked? How come you get to see her naked but not me?"

Hermione stood up and yelled, "Nobody saw me naked and will see me naked!"

Harry convincingly made people think that he was mad and yelled, "That's not fair! I let you see me naked but why won't you let me see you?"

Hermione's eyes went wide again as Ron yelled, "When did she see you naked?"

Hermione yelled back, "I haven't seen anybody naked!"

Harry yelled out, "Fine, so I haven't seen her nude and she hasn't seen me nude!" He started to laugh at his friends obvious discomfort of being stared at while listening to them talk about each other about being naked.

Ginny decided to turn the tables on Harry for embarrassing her with the comments about her body so she stood up, looked around at everybody, and yelled out, "Who wants to see Harry Potter naked?"

Harry immediately stopped laughing, turned red, got down from the bench, and made his way out of the Great Hall due to all of the girls' lustful gaze at him. Most of the Great Hall was frozen and barely registered Harry's retreat then all of a sudden a few girls got up and made to hastily follow. This knocked a few people back to their senses as Ginny, Kayla, Luna, Neville, Ron, and Hermione rushed after him. They made it to him when he got to the doors of the Great Hall.

Ginny knocked Harry unto the floor and whispered to him, "You should never mess with a Weasley when it comes to pranking."

Harry smiled, leaned up to her, and whispered so only she could hear, "Who said that I was playing around. I meant what I said." He slowly slid away from her as Ginny went as red as her hair and frozen still.

After making his way out from under Ginny, he stood up to see a sea of people making their way towards him that were lead by girls. His eyes went wide as the people came closer. His friends were circling around him to prepare to shield him when he said, "I should have known better than to make fun of all of you."

His friends looked at each other as if they were silently agreeing with something than Hermione said, "You know Harry. I think that we'll leave you to handle this. Plus, we don't want to get in the way of all of those girls that want to sneak a peak of the Boy-Who-Lived."

The rest of them nodded and backed away from him. Harry shook his head and said, "You all are wrong for this. If those girls take me than there's no telling what they will do."

Kayla smirked at him and said, "Well, look at it this way. You get a bit more insight on how some girls work."

Ron yelled out, "Hurry up, Harry's about to run!"

Harry turned and started to run while being chased by a mob of girls. His friends just broke down and laughed as the girls were making it passed him. They laughed even harder every time a guy would be rushing after Harry.

Later on that week, it was time for the Hogsmeade weekend. The night before the weekend started, Harry received a letter from Mr. Slate who was now his attorney and handled all of his miscellaneous affairs. He wrote Harry updating Harry on the status of all of the projects that Harry had Mr. Slate work on.

The Wizarding Educational Program that was designed to reduce and eliminate stereotypical and prejudicial behavior was well underway under all of Europe and started to branch out over into Asia and North America. It turned out that the program was well received in most areas which prompted other programs of similar nature to be started by other wealthy wizarding families. The fund set aside to help families that have been affected by Voldemort and his Death Eaters was gaining wide acceptance by almost everybody in the wizarding world. This fund was draining the fastest but it was also the largest and fastest to grow in endowments as other charities and fundraising programs were started throughout the world to help this program continue and grow. To Harry the most important program that he cared about was the orphanages.

As it turned out, four orphanages has been set-up through The Marauder's Orphans Program that were located in York, London, Manchester, and with the main facility operating in Hogsmeade. The orphanage in York was known as The Moony Center, the London site was known as The Padfoot Center, the Manchester site was known as The Lily Center, and the facility at Hogsmeade was known as The Prongs Center. Each orphanage were operating with fully well equipped staffs that included a team of effective and dedicated teachers that always challenged and promoted the children so much that many of them were beyond the levels of their peers who were not

in the orphanages. There were two counselors at each site to help the children deal with the trauma of what they went through and help them make new friends. There were financial advisors, a director, two medical witches or wizards, a recreational advisor to keep the children occupied with leisure activities, and a small allowance program was set up so the kids can buy little things that they may want. All of the necessities like clothing and supplies were already given to the children and replaced as they grew or were damaged.

Harry wanted to learn more about the orphanages in particular so he wrote Mr. Slate asking him to setup half a day for him to meet the staff and kids at The Prongs Center. He also requested if a few of the representatives from the other three orphanages would send a representative there also to learn more about the other three sites. The meeting was setup for the morning of the Hogsmeade visit shortly after when the students were allowed to go into town. This gave him an early meeting and time to enjoy the town for the rest of the day. His friends later found out and they all agreed to go to the meeting together and meet Mr. Slate on their way to the orphanage.

Harry really wanted to go all by himself so it wouldn't seem as intimidating as a group that showed up looking like a mob but talked about it as a way to get away from the subject of the Ball but more specifically who Harry was going to take. It seemed like all of his friends became more persistent as time passed with who was going with who and the biggest question at Hogwarts was who did Harry ask that was such a big secret.

The morning of the Hogsmeade weekend started off like any other weekend with the exception that the student woke a little earlier than usual with excited expressions and talking about being able to leave the castle. The younger students didn't share the same excited sentiment as the older students because they couldn't leave the castle. After eating breakfast which Harry discreetly muttered the poison revealing charm which became habitual because he got into the habit of performing the charm discreetly before every meal. The group made their way to The Prongs Center after meeting and greeting Mr. Slate near Three Broomsticks.

The Prongs Center was located just off of the main street in Hogsmeade and closer to the residential area of the town than it was to Hogwarts. The Orphanage from the outside was three stories tall and was all white. There was a spacious front lawn that was encased by a simple black metal fence that didn't really seem like it had a purpose other than to make the area look nicer. There was a large two story tall entrance way that covered a large double French style doors to the entrance of the building. The entrance way were supported by two white columns with the words, "The Prongs Center" written in blue on columns going down vertically with the words, "The Marauder's Orphanage" also in blue written horizontally across the top of the entrance way.

The group which consisted of Harry, Ginny, Hermione, Ron, Kayla, Luna, Neville, and Mr. Slate made there way through the large front doors which were not locked. Upon entering the building they were greeted by a tall blond lady dressed in formal dress robes saying, "Good Morning everybody." She saw Mr. Slate and walked over to him and shook his hand as the two of them greeted each other. Mr. Slate than introduced everybody and they learned that she was Ms. Linda Grant who was the director of all four orphanages.

There were the occasionally child that walked around but it didn't seem like many of them had woken up yet. Ms. Grant escorted the group into a large meeting room on the first floor which was located in the back of the offices which were directly to their right. In the meeting room, there were three representatives from each orphanage along with most of the staff from the Prongs Center. The only staff members those were not present at the Prongs Center were on duty taking care of the kids. The other three orphanages sent their director who talked about the general management and information of their respective orphanage. One of the financial advisors from each orphanage was also sent to discuss fiscal issues and any problems that they may have. The last person that the other three orphanages sent was one of the counselors that voiced the children's concerns and possible ways to better help the children.

The meeting lasted about two hours where many issues were discussed and recommendations were given. A few of the major issues discussed were what to do if the fighting were to get out of

hand and the orphanages would be filled passed their current capacity, ways to help the children better handle what lead them to be brought to an orphanage, methods for preparing students to either go to a wizarding school or muggle school when they became of age, and any special needs that the orphanages needed to address or prepare for so they can better handle any foreseeable problems. Some of the issues that were settled were that if the orphanages were to reach 75 in capacity than they would try to redistribute to other orphanages but if the other orphanages were facing the same problem than plans would be made to open another orphanage. They would also bring in tutors for the summer months to help any student who wishes to continue their studies over the break. With the threat of the war escalating, they also planned for evacuation of the children if the city that they were in were attacked by disbursing them among the other centers or sending them to the Ministry of Magic, and St. Mungos. New programs that were to be added to each site were one social event per quarter of a year for all of the orphanages to get together so the children can meet each other with each orphanage taking turns hosting the event. All in all, everybody was pleased with the outcomes of what was settled. The staff was happy that Harry and his friends were genuinely concerned and wanted to take an active part in helping the kids while Harry's group was happy that all of the staff members seemed to share the same sentiment.

After they left the meeting, Ms. Grant led the group on a tour of the Prongs Center while the other staff members returned to work or went back to the other orphanages. Ms. Grant's tour revealed that the Prongs Center currently hosted twenty five children with the facility designed to operate for one hundred children if necessary. This did not include approximately five children that were attending Hogwarts at the time using the scholarship program that Harry had set up earlier. The center had four floors in total which included a basement. The top two floors were dormitories which housed four kids to a room divided by gender with the exception of siblings who were allowed to share the same room in the beginning of their arrival but needed to be separated to open up to other children. The dormitories each had four queen size beds with a dresser on one side and a desk on the other side. Each dormitory also have a shared bathroom. The first floor housed the private offices for the teachers on the left rear side of the building. The right rear side of the building housed a dining facility

and kitchen similar to the Great Hall at Hogwarts. The front-right of the building are the administrative offices. The left-front of the building is a communal area that has large sofas facing a large fireplace. There are large stairs on both the right and left side of the building dividing the teacher's offices, dining area, administrative offices, and communal area. The second floor houses the classrooms and meeting rooms with the exception of the rear right section of the building which houses a large library. The basement is a large recreational area many different relaxing areas for smaller gatherings with toys and games for the kids to play with.

When the group made it down to the basement, it seemed like all of the children were awake and were down there playing in groups with an adult watching over them. Most of the kids didn't seem like there was a care in the world and were joyfully playing with no discernable division between the kids. The group decided to go and play with the kids for a little while.

A/N: Thank you to my reviewers and keep it up. Now to address my reviewers since my last post.

JPx: Thank you for the review and you are right there is a conspiracy going on but the question now is how many conspiracies are running around.

Rivenn: Thank you and sorry it took so long to update. I hope this update was quick enough.

Dancerrdw: Thank you for the support.

IamSiriusgrl: Thank you and I think that this chapter supported one of your guesses.

Sirius009: Thank you.

Lonsome-love: Thank you and you have some pretty good guesses there. I'm sure that you're firmly entrenched in one of those guesses now since another clue was given.

Bandgsecurtiyaw: Thank you

Glitzystar: Thank you and I am honored to have your longest review. Don't worry, I will finish this story and already have the chapters with all of the answers written.

N6uos: Sorry that you don't like the story anymore but oh well, can't please everybody.

Yorkvillebird: Thank you and I was tempted to have the whole team walk out also but didn't want the team quitting the competition.

Shadowssongs: Thank you and yes the updates will come quicker during spring break.

Chapter 18

Anna's Story and Ginny's Decision

Harry noticed a small little girl with dark red hair that didn't seem to be enjoying herself and excluded herself from everybody and just sat there away from everybody playing with a doll by herself. Harry asked Ms. Grant, "Who's that girl over there?" Harry motioned to the girl playing with the doll.

Ms. Grant said, "That's Anna Thymes. She doesn't really talk or socialize with anybody ever since she came here. Her parents were killed in the Diagon Alley attack a few months ago."

Not taking his eyes off the girl, Harry asked, "Does she have any family left?"

She nodded and said, "Yes, she has a brother who is in his first year at Hogwarts. His name is Anthony. I believe that he was sorted in Hufflepuff. He wasn't given the option to visit his sister because first years are not allowed to go on Hogsmeade trips but he writes to her every other day letting her know what he's doing and checking up on her."

"I take it that she can read and write than?"

"She doesn't have difficulty reading but her writing skills still needs much work. A teacher is usually there to help her each time she writes to her brother and helps her read his letters. She has been working really so she can write to Anthony without any help."

"How old is she?"

"She's seven but is about to turn eight in a week I believe."

He nodded and said, "Thank you Ms. Grant." Harry made his way over to Anna and tried to make himself known by walking around her before sitting down in front of her in hopes of not startling her.

Anna looked up at him for a moment and Harry took that instance to say, "Hi Anna, I'm Harry." He extended his hand which Anna

reluctantly shook after looking around and got a nod from the adult supervisor who was watching Harry and Anna. After shaking his hand, Anna went back to playing with her doll.

Harry asked, "How are you Anna?"

Anna stopped playing with her doll and looked up at him with a face that seemed like she was thinking of what to do. She said in a soft voice that were barely audible, "I'm fine."

Harry didn't want to keep the girl talking so he asked, "How come you're not playing with anybody?"

She looked towards the ground and said, "I don't want to play with them."

"How come you don't want to play with them?"

"I just want to play with my brother." She gave a hint of a smile and said, "He takes care of me you know. Anthony is good to me."

Harry didn't know Anthony and didn't want to make her upset so he said, "I heard about your brother. He's really a good person."

She had a large smile on her face but it quickly disappeared. She asked, "Do you talk to Anthony?"

Harry said, "I haven't talked to him but that's what I heard," he ran his hand through his hair absentmindedly which showed his scar.

She pointed to his scar and asked, "How did you get that?"

He took a second to think of what he wanted to say then said, "An evil man a long time ago gave me this scar."

Her eyes lit up as she realized something, she asked, "Are you Harry Potter?"

Harry wasn't annoyed at all by what she said. As a matter of fact, he was actually glad that his fame was good for something. He nodded and said, "Yup!"

She was so happy when he said that but her smile faltered a bit which Harry noticed and he asked, "What's wrong?"

She looked down at her doll and said, "I'm bad luck. Everything that is good around ends up going away."

"What do you mean?"

"It all started a few months ago when mum and dad took me and Anthony to go get his school supplies." She stopped and tears started to form in her eyes.

Harry saw this and picked her up and sat her in his lap. All of the other kids started to notice the two of them and stopped what they were doing and slowly made their way towards them. The two of them were in their own world and didn't notice or care what was going on around them. Harry didn't want to pressure her but felt that she needed to let it out so he asked her, "You don't have to tell me if you don't want to. I understand what it feels like but I'll tell you my story if it will help."

Anna nodded and said, "We were shopping in Diagon Alley when all of these men showed up wearing these white masks. They pointed their wands at anybody that moved and said some words than either a green or a red light came out. Every time a red light hit something than it would blow up but a green light would make the person fall down."

She took a deep breath then said, "When these men showed up, my mum picked me up and we ran towards a store because my dad kept on yelling, 'Get the kids out of here! Find the nearest fireplace and floo home!' So we ran as my dad followed with his wand out. We made it close to a store but one of those people with a white mask popped out in front of us; I think that daddy called them Dead Munchers."

Harry said, "That's Deatheaters."

"Oh, thank you. Two Death Eaters just showed up in front of mum and she froze. My dad caught up with us and tried to shield us from them. My dad was fighting off the two Deatheaters but he was hit by a green light and just fell down. Anthony ran up to my dad and tried to get him to wake up. Anthony kept on yelling at my dad to wake up but he wouldn't. Mum said that he wasn't going to come back and for Anthony to get behind her. Mum put me down and begged the Deatheaters to leave us alone. Mum told us to run and try to get home but we didn't know where to go. So we just stood behind mum while Anthony was trying to shield me. They kept on teasing mum saying some really bad things. My mum reached in her pocket and pulled out her wand. The two evil men pointed their wands at her and one of them said something and mum was on the ground yelling in pain. She was shaking uncontrollably."

Anna had tears coming out of her freely now as she sobbed the rest of her story. She sobbed, "All of a sudden it ended and one of them told my mum that she would die and they would kidnap me and Anthony and do the same thing to us that they just did to her everyday. That got mummy angry and she tried to reach for her wand but a green light hit her and she wasn't moving anymore. My brother got in front of me and all I could do was hang onto him. I was just too scared to do anything else. He told me that he will protect me so all I could do was hug him even harder. Then those men pointed their wands at us but this beautiful blue and white bird showed up out of nowhere and attacked those evil men. Anthony and me just watched as the bird attacked and before we knew it more help came and all those men with white masks disappeared. After a while the Aurors took us here and then my brother had to go to Hogwarts so I'm all by myself now."

Harry hugged her tight and she cried on his shoulder. He said some soothing words to her as she cried and encouraged her to let it all out. He said, "You know something similar happened to me. I lost my dad, mum, godfather, and a friend to that same man that ordered the attack on Diagon Alley. It is easy to push everybody away and be alone so you don't have to feel hurt anymore but that doesn't work out very well because there is nothing to live for anymore. You

shouldn't give up hope. When you have hope tied in with love than anything can be done so always follow your heart. Let your heart lead you but let your mind keep you in control."

She stopped crying and said, "Thank you. I'll try to do what you said."

"You can talk to me whenever you want. Feel free to write me whenever you want and I'll write back as fast as I can."

With a smile and a hopeful expression she asked, "Can I tell my brother that I know you?"

Harry smiled back and said, "Of course you can, I'll even let your brother know that I got to meet his beautiful and brave little sister. You can tell anybody you want and can I tell people that you're my friend?"

She jumped up, gave him a fierce hug, and said, "Yes, I'm Harry Potter's friend."

Harry hugged her back and when she let go and backed away a bit, Harry said, "I have a surprise for you. I want you to meet one of my friends." With that, Harry whistled and Nightlight appeared on his shoulder.

Nightlight flew down to a chair near Anna as she slowly approached the Phoenix. Harry said, "Anna, this is Nightlight. He is my phoenix that helped you that day."

Nightlight nodded slightly as Anna reached out and slowly pet the phoenix just like Harry was doing. She soon became comfortable and said to the phoenix, "Thank you Nightlight for saving me and my brother that day." She then hugged the phoenix. Nightlight started to sing a phoenix song which filled her heart.

Everybody got up and met Nightlight and sat in a large circle and exchanged some kind of funny story or adventure that each of them went through with Harry and his friends telling the most stories as everybody seemed to get wrapped up in the stories of the Boy-Who-Lived but more importantly the boy who saw them as a friend.

That night Harry went to look for the person that he was most familiar with in Hufflepuff. He found Susan and asked her about Anthony and found out that he is usually a loner and rarely talks to anybody and he is usually seen writing letters to his sister. Harry saw him sitting alone at dinner at the far end of the table that was closest to the Head Table.

Harry excused himself from his friends at the Gryffindor table and made his way over to the Hufflepuff table. Half of the school had their eyes on him as he made his way over to Anthony. He sat down across from him and whisperings could be heard from the Hufflepuff and Gryffindor students to what was going on. Anthony was stunned that Harry would sit down with him.

Harry said, "Hi Anthony, I'm Harry."

Anthony reached out and shook Harry's hand and said, "I know about you already. I don't mean to be rude and all but how come you're sitting with me?"

"I hope you don't mind. It's just that I met your sister earlier today and wanted to pass a message to you from her. She says hi and that she is doing fine."

"Thank you. I wish that I could've gone to visit her."

"I know and she wanted to visit you also. I understand if you don't want to tell anybody about this and me and my friends won't tell anybody either."

"It's alright. I usually tell anybody that asks me about it so don't worry about it."

"Alright, I hear that your sister's birthday is coming up soon. I was wondering if you could help me pick out something for her."

Anthony's eyes opened wider as Harry asked for advice on what to get for a birthday present for his sister. The two of them ended up talking for a few minutes and they were later joined by the rest of

Harry's friends who came over to talk to them. Anthony hadn't talked so much since he came to Hogwarts and knew that he would be able to confide in Harry if he needed to or wanted to talk.

After a few days of Harry randomly eating over at the Hufflepuff table or Ravenclaw table to eat with Luna, students from Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, and Hufflepuff could be seen eating more frequently at each others table which left a few students from Slytherin envious of the other three houses. The Slytherins that wanted to join the other houses were members of the DA but didn't want to cause a civil war in their own house which they would be outnumbered.

Harry had gone to Dumbledore to ask permission to go to Hogsmeade with Anthony for Anna's birthday but Dumbledore refused. After more persistence throughout the week, Dumbledore continued to refuse which had Harry thinking of alternative methods to meet Anna. The night of Anna's birthday, Harry was sneaking out of their common room to meet up with Anthony but was caught by Ginny so Ginny ended up coming along.

Harry and Ginny disillusioned themselves and stayed under the invisibility cloak just to be extra cautious met up with Anthony who was waiting just outside of the Hufflepuff common room. The three of them made it through the secret tunnel that exited at Honeydukes. They made there way over to the Orphanage and after meeting up with the staff to alert them of there presence they made there way down to the basement where they waited with the rest of the orphans minus Anna.

Anna was with a teacher at the time that brought her in minutes later to a surprise party where Anthony was kept hidden. Anna was happy and became even happier when Harry and Ginny made there way through the crowd and wished the young girl a happy birthday after giving her an affectionate hug.

The party was just getting started when Harry asked her, "What do you want for your birthday Anna?"

Anna scrunched up her face as she thought then said, "I wished that Anthony could be here with me."

Harry covered her eyes and nodded to Anthony who took off the invisibility cloak. Once he took his hands off her eyes, the two of them rushed at each other, hugged for a very long time, and started talking happily. While the two of them were talking to each other Harry made his way over to Ms. Grant and asked her, "How is Anna doing now?"

Ms. Grant said, "She's doing much better now. After the day you visited and talked to her she opened up much more and could be seen participating much more in class and with her peers outside of class. She's happier and looks forward to your letters along with Anthony's letters. She keeps every one of them in her desk."

The party went on for a few hours where Anna spent time with everybody but had most of her time dominated with the company of Harry, Anthony, and Ginny. The three of them stayed for two hours and left to go back to the castle because they didn't want to be caught. Harry and Ginny walked Anthony back to his common room and after Anthony thanked Harry over and over again for the night Harry and Ginny went back to their own rooms.

The next evening Ginny knocked on Harry's trunk and asked to come down. The two of them met with each other in the common area of Harry's trunk. After getting some butterbeer for the two of them Harry asked, "What is it that you wanted to talk about?"

Ginny was nervous and Harry sensed that but didn't call her on it. Ginny said, "You know Harry, it was really nice what you did for Anthony and Anna. I think that you couldn't make them any happier."

Harry replied, "It's what I could do and I'm happy that it worked out for the best." He paused a moment than said, "I wanted to thank you for joining me last night. It wouldn't have been the same if you weren't there and I know that Anthony appreciates it also."

Ginny blushed. Harry asked, "Was that what you wanted to talk about?"

Ginny's nervousness came back and summoned up her courage to say, "I wanted to talk to you about the Ball. It's a few weeks away and wondered if you had any advice on my admirer."

Harry asked, "Do you want to go with your admirer?"

"I want to find out who he is but I also want to go with someone else though."

"Who is it that you wanted to go with?"

"Well, you know that I've had a childish crush on you for most of my life but I've gotten over the crush. I know that you are much more to me than that now."

Harry raised his hand to stop her than asked, "I'm guessing that the person that you want to go to the dance with is me than."

She nodded and had a hopeful expression on her face. Harry continued on saying, "I'll be honest with you Ginny." He became a little nervous when he said, "Ginny, this school year has been as good of a year as I can expect I guess. In reality, I've spent more time this year studying and training that I don't get much time to enjoy myself or what most would consider enjoyable. But what makes all of this enjoyable was mostly because of you. When I think about this year in general there has been lots of ups and downs and as far as I can think of the lowest point was when Sirius died with my high point when I spent that night with you under the stars after Ron and Hermione became a couple."

The two of them were staring into each other's eyes at this point. Ginny asked, "Harry do you want to go to the ball with me?"

Harry said, "I do want to go to the ball with you but I think that you should go to the ball and find out who your admirer is."

Ginny's emotions played on her face when Harry talked. Her eyes lit up when he said that he wanted to go to the ball with her but it all fell apart when the word 'but' was mentioned and recovered a bit when he said that the reason was she should find out who her admirer was.

Ginny said, "I want to go to the ball with you also. I can live without finding out who my admirer is."

Harry shook his head and said, "I promise you something Ginny. I'll be here for you if your secret admirer does not work out but I think that this would be best." Ginny wanted to interrupt but he stopped her and continued saying, "I want you to be able to find out about that person first or you will regret it. I know that you will ask yourself about that person."

Ginny knew that Harry was right about questioning herself but she didn't want to give up Harry. She waited for so long for him and now he wanted to be with her but the secret admirer stood in the way. She asked him, "Do you promise what you said before? That you will be there if things with the admirer don't work out with during the ball?"

Harry said, "I promise."

"Alright, I'll go to the ball with my admirer. Will you tell him for me?"

"I will and I know that he will be more than happy."

The two of them talked for a little while longer about the last week and what have been going on with the orphanages and a few ideas that she was having. After a while, Ron came down and asked to talk to Harry alone and Ginny reluctantly left.

Ron said, "Look, I know that one of my attributes is being an over protective brother about my sister but I want to know what's going on between you and my sister."

Harry sensed that this conversation was coming but didn't realize that it would be this soon. He said, "There's nothing really going on between the two of us. The two of us are really close friends."

"Look it doesn't take a genius to see what's going on between you and Ginny. It's obvious that the two of you like each other and I don't want her going around getting hurt because of you especially if there is something going on between you and somebody else like Cho."

Harry sighed then said, "In all truthfulness, I do like your sister and from what I can tell she likes me also. It's just that I want her to go to the ball and find out who her admirer is before she tries anything with me. Plus there is nothing going on between with any other girls."

"What was that that Cho and you were talking about that you never told us about?"

"It was nothing really, Cho asked me to go to the ball with her and I said that I would think about it because I asked somebody already."

"Who did you ask?"

"I don't want to say. I prefer that to be a secret between the two of us. You will find out who she is at the ball."

"I can keep a secret you know."

"It's not that. This is just a secret that I want to keep between her and me for now just like there are personal things between you and Hermione that you wouldn't want to tell me or more specifically I don't want to know." Harry smiled at the end because his friend was getting nervous and turned red at the thought of the things he and Hermione have done that they wouldn't want to tell anybody.

Ron said, "Alright, I can live with that. I'll let you get back to what you were doing before Ginny showed up." He made his way towards the ladder than paused and said, "Just so you know Harry. Out of everybody at Hogwarts, I wished that she was going with you. I know I am over protective but I know that I can trust you."

Harry said, "Thanks," as Ron climbed out of the trunk.

The next day for some reason unknown the entire school knew about Ginny's acceptance of the invitation by the secret admirer to the ball. Ginny was happy that now she would have Harry if she wanted and be able to find out who her admirer was. She came into the Great Hall finding the rest of her friends sitting together listening to Harry and Kayla talk. She sat down next to him and grabbed his hand that was under the table. He squeezed her hand to let her know that he

was fine with this as she heard Kayla say, “I think that we both know that you’re holding back now in our duels. I’ve studied these different forms of magic for years and you seem to grasp them with no effort.”

Harry said, “I don’t mean to make you seem inferior.”

“It’s alright Harry. I just think that we need to figure out a way to challenge you. It’s not going to do much good to practice with me if you aren’t challenged.”

“Do you have any ideas?”

“Well, I was thinking that you would duel with a few of us going up against you at the same time to help you fight with multiple opponents and build your endurance. Plus, I’ll work with you develop that attack abilities of our Chinese paper shields.”

Hermione asked, “What are the Chinese paper shields?”

Kayla said, “It’s based on Charms where there is a thin strip of white paper with a Chinese character on it that is used as a shield against spells or objects, a warning/detection alarm to unfriendly wizards or creatures, or the third and most difficult form is the attack. I have been unable to use its attack form but I think that Harry might be able to do it because it requires a great deal of energy and concentration. I’ve been teaching Harry about this ever since our duel.”

Ron asked, “When did the two of you duel? I’ve never heard about it.”

Harry said, “She showed me when we were trying to gauge our abilities the first time we practiced with each other. She’s been teaching me about how other cultures use magic to protect or attack their opponents while I’ve been teaching her on the spells that I know and help her balance physical and mental flexibility, defense, attack, agility, and endurance. It’s kind of like an extremely advanced form of the DA.”

Ginny asked, “Are you going to teach us what Kayla taught you?”

Harry said, "I guess I could teach you guys but I think that Kayla would be the best because she's more familiar with it than I am."

Everybody turned to Kayla expectantly and she said, "I guess I can try to teach everybody after Christmas with Harry's help of course. Oh that reminds me." She turned back to Harry again, "I heard that you usually spend your holidays at school and was wondering if you wanted to spend it with my back in the states."

Harry said, "Well, I was actually thinking of opening up Potter Mansion so a few people can visit it and you're more than welcome to join us if you want but I didn't plan my entire holiday so I might be able to come out there and visit you."

Kayla asked, "I'll be glad to spend some time there. I'll probably be able to spend the start of the holidays there but I'll have to spend the rest of my time home starting on Christmas Eve."

"That's fine than. So the start of the holidays you'll be with me than and after Christmas I'll come and join you in the states."

Luna asked in her usual airy voice, "Who did you invite to Potter Mansion? I would love a chance to visit there if possible."

Harry said, "You all are welcome there its just I guess I forgot to tell you all about it. I've already written letters to Mr. and Mrs. Granger, Mrs. Longbottom, Mr. Lovegood, Remus, Tonks, and all of the Weasleys not at Hogwarts minus Percy. I sent it out a few days ago with Hedwig and I guess responses will arrive sometimes this week."

Ginny said, "We'll be glad to visit Potter Mansion with you and I know that mum and dad will want to be there also. But do you think that Dumbledore will let you go to America?"

Harry replied, "I hope that you all will be able to make it and in all honesty I don't really care what Dumbledore says. It's my life and I know things that he doesn't so as long as he plays a game of secrets than I will play that game also."

Neville asked, "What happened between you and him? Dumbledore used to be your idol and it's like he is your enemy now."

Harry sighed then said, "I don't hate him, it's just that the two of us have a lot of issues that I don't really want to talk about."

Everybody let it go but felt that they had to figure out a way to break Harry and get him to talk about it. They ended up talking about what they would do over the holidays and what they did or traditions that each of their families had for Christmas. Harry mentally took note of everything so he can plan for everybody to still have their Christmas traditions. Later on in the week, Harry received replies from everybody either by letter or verbally from Tonks and Remus that they would be able to attend. Harry also reluctantly agreed to allow Dumbledore to come and visit the place due to the urging of all of his friends including Remus and Tonks.

A/N: Thank you to my reviewers. Everybody seems to agree that the admirer will either be Harry or a character that I have hidden. The next chapter will unveil the admirer and the Ball. I think that there is a seed of doubt if Harry is still the admirer. Next chapter should be up on Saturday. Now to address my reviewers.

JPx: Thank you for the review and hope that you were just as pleased with this chapter.

Dancerrdw: Thank you and I'll try to work more humor in.

SilverWingZ: Thank you and there will be lots of back pedaling so every detail will become important later on.

Loopy dane: Thank you and you will find out in the next chapter if Harry does show up in a disguise but I promise you that the admirer does show up all covered up.

Yorkvillebird: Thank you and the question of admirer will be answered soon.

Cynthia1850: Thank you and I agree that spending money on making children feel happy and loved is a good thing.

Lillian Marie Potter: Thank you and I will keep the updates coming.

Nutty Al: Thank you

IamSiriusgrl: Thank you and I guess this is adding more doubts if Harry is the admirer.

DoomGazeHell: Thank you and I'll try to continue to implement humor.

Rivenn: Thank you and the naming of the orphanages after the marauders was a last minute thing that worked out. That question of a Slytherin admirer does add confusion does it not?

Lonsome-Love: I guess you are still thinking that its Harry. The ball will be in the next chapter.

Donalddeutsch: Thank you and it is a strong possibility that it is Harry but be warned that I like to play tricks.

Ducks with ballons: Thank you.

YelloWitchGrl: Thank you and I hate it when that happens when I get 'then' and 'than' mixed up but I'll get better at it.

Gaul1: Thank you and I hope that you liked how I had them interact with the kids.

Chapter 19

The Ball

A week passed and the familiar site of the morning post arrived again. This time to everyone's surprise Hedwig came in with a package and instead of dropping it off for Harry dropped it off for Ginny. It was a large rectangular box. Ginny picked up the letter and read it.

Ginny,

I was so happy that you accepted to come to the ball as my date that I couldn't sleep that night. Thank you so much for making my day. I asked Harry to borrow Hedwig to send you this package because I guess it's no longer a secret that Harry knows who I am. I hope that you like the dress robe, necklace, earrings, and bracelet that are in this package. Harry helped me pick it out. I know that you will make the gown look better than it already is.

I'll meet you at the Ball in the middle of the dance floor. I'll be wearing the same colors as you but switch the colors around for my robe. I have also arranged for a way to let the entire school know that I will be at the ball with the most beautiful, smartest, independent, and kind witch in all of Hogwarts. At the dance there will be two banners hanging in the middle of the Great Hall with one bearing the Weasley family crest to represent you and the other will be white until you find out who I am.

I got that idea from what Harry did when he returned to Hogwarts. Please don't let anybody know of the contents of this letter so nobody tries to impersonate me. I won't truly be happy until I met you at the Ball.

FireFlight

Hermione helped Ginny open up her package as her friends gathered around to see what it was that she got. The large package revealed smaller boxes inside of it. The largest box had a beautiful glimmering simple white dress robe that was made of a soft silky heavy material that just flowed towards the ground. There were small faint swirls of

dark blue glittery lines that ran around the robe that wouldn't usually be seen if it wasn't for the light hitting the blue glitter.

The girls just stared at it. Kayla said, "That is absolutely gorgeous. If I remember correctly, I saw that at a fashion show in New York and the designer said that he would only make one. He also said that it only has one charm on it which was to fit only the first girl that was to wear it."

Ginny asked, "So I'm not going fit it then? Can I do alterations to it so it would fit?"

Kayla responded, "You don't have to change it. Hopefully nobody wore it yet so you would be the first person to wear it. If somebody has worn it than you just have to try to get your body to fit the dress robe if you want to wear it."

"I thought you said you saw it at a fashion show. I thought models wore what they show off."

"They do in most case but for this dress robe, it was just bought onto the stage by the designer so he can display it. That's how everybody knew that only one witch could ever wear it."

"I hope that nobody has ever worn it. It's just absolutely gorgeous."

Harry said, "I'm sure he wouldn't have gotten it for you if somebody has worn it before."

Hermione said, "Harry's probably right Ginny. But from what I remember there was a matching dress robe for the wizard. That is the same but it is dark blue but with white glitter trim. It is said that the same charm is on the wizards robe also so these two dress robes will belong to only this couple forever."

Ron asked, "Hermione since when did you get into fashion?"

Hermione replied, "I read it in Witch Weekly." Before she realized that she said it out loud she covered her mouth.

Ron had a triumphant smile on his face and said, "I knew that you read it. Always saying that Ginny leaving it around your room."

"You know Ron. I do read other things besides books. After all I am a witch so what's wrong with me reading Witch Weekly?"

Harry interrupted them by saying, "Why are you giving them a hard time Ron? You read Witch Weekly also."

Ron began to blush than said, "I was doing that for research. I told you not to say anything about it."

"Sorry, it just slipped out."

Ginny seeing her opportunity turned to Ron and said, "Wait, you read Witch Weekly? Is that why I can find it sometimes in your room?"

Harry was doing is hardest not to laugh but was finding that hard to do as he was slightly shaking at holding it in. Ron said, "I was just trying to figure out how a girl thinks anyway."

Hermione and Kayla were also finding it hard to not laugh at Ron. Neville tried to help Ron by saying, "There's nothing wrong with reading Witch Weekly. I think he should have a right to know what girls find as hot and what's not."

Harry, Hermione, Kayla, and Ginny couldn't hold it in anymore and laughed uncontrollably. After Harry noticed the glare that he was getting from Ron he said, "Sorry Ron. I couldn't hold it in." While trying to help Ron out he said, "Ginny what are in the other boxes?"

The three girls recovered soon after and Ginny opened a small box which had a set of studded diamond earrings when examined closely had a small red 'G' inside of the diamond.

Luna saw it and said, "Those are beautiful. I heard that only one wizard in the entire world knows how to do that kind of engraving. From what daddy says, the last time the wizard did that was for a gift for his wife which was over fifty years ago. He only does it for a wizard that he believes is truly in love with a witch. It is said that when

the earrings are worn than it's like the witch is protected by a shield made of the wizards love."

Ginny asked, "That's beautiful. I wonder how my admirer got these. How strong is the shield?"

Luna replied, "The strongest that the shield can do is reducing an average wizard's spell by fifty percent."

"I guess that I shouldn't take these off. But what happens if he doesn't love me?"

"Well, once that happens than the 'G' in your earring will disappear and become just like any other diamond earring. But from what I understand, it comes as part of a set."

Ginny opened another box which revealed a simple bracelet made of two rods of platinum that interwoven with each other. Luna said, "That is weird. Ginny, I thought that you said that you don't know your admirer."

Ginny said, "I might know him but I don't know his identity. Why do you ask?"

"You see the two rods on your bracelet. It is a sign of trust between the person that gave it to you and you. The more tightly wound the rods the more you two trust each other but the larger the gap between the two rods means the relationship will fall apart due to lack of trust."

"I wonder who it could be that I trust so much and trusts me so much."

"Well, keep in mind that it might be somebody that you don't know you trust but subconsciously trusts him."

"That doesn't help but that does narrow down the possibilities of people to those that I know."

"I'm going to guess that the last box contains a necklace."

Ginny opened the box which had three diamonds cut like a tear drop with the smallest diamond on the necklace and the largest diamond farthest from the necklace. The diamonds seemed to be suspended by magic because the middle diamond and largest diamond didn't have anything connecting it to the rest of the necklace but always remained underneath the smallest tear drop. The rest of the necklace was made of platinum.

Ginny said, "I guess that I shouldn't be surprised that this looks just as beautiful as everything else."

The rest of the girls nodded while Luna said, "That necklace has three purposes. It is an extremely weak protection charm on it which is representative of the smallest tear drop. The middle tear drop is a moderately strong healing charm which heals physical ailments. The largest tear drop is an extremely strong mental shield to help protect against mental attacks."

Hermione said, "Whoever it is that gave you these accessories really want you to be safe and wants to let you know how they feel about you."

Kayla said, "Yeah, I'm really intrigued now who this person is. How was he able to get these things?"

Ron said, "Well, I guess he would have to be extremely rich to buy one of a kind things or be really close friends to whoever created each thing."

The group was quiet for a minute as they contemplated who the possible people were. As far as members of there group is concerned, Ron was out because he was Ginny's brother, Neville was out because he and Luna seemed to be taken with each other but moving slowly in their relationship, and Harry was out because it was Harry that advised Ginny to go to the Ball with the admirer and not with him. They were interrupted by Hermione telling everybody it was time to go to class. For the next few days, the question of who Harry's date is and who is Ginny's admirer became the talk of the school. The school was more interested in Harry's date because Ginny's admirer

has been around longer but Harry being the most desired wizard at school had many witches guessing.

The day of the Ball arrived and the entire castle was busy. After finding out more information about the Ball, it turned out that this will be a Hogwarts only event unlike during the Tri-wizard tournament. With the assistance from Tonks and Remus, Harry was the sole decorator of the Great Hall for that evening. The decoration started almost immediately after lunch and dinner for those who will not be attending the Ball was to be served in the House Common Rooms.

The Ball was set to start at seven in the evening and the girls were seen running off and started their preparations around three that afternoon while most of the guys went down to the pitch for a pickup game of Quidditch. Hermione and Ron will be going to the Ball together which wasn't a surprise. Neville and Luna were going to go to the Ball together but the biggest surprise to most of the school was Kayla who decided to not attend the Ball and go home to celebrate an American holiday known as Thanksgiving. She would be gone from school for three days and missing one day of school.

Harry finished his decorations and returned to his trunk by using the trick he used earlier with hiding in a broom closet but this time he had Nightlight who took him to his trunk so he could prepare and not run into anybody who was going to ask him about his date. Hermione looked absolutely beautiful with her hair worn up again and dressed in dark red dress robes. Ron was also wearing dark red dress robes that were trimmed in white with the Weasley Family Crest over his left chest.

Luna and Neville were wearing dark purple dress robes. Luna still had her bottle cap necklace and also wore her hair up and what looked like two chopsticks in her hair. Her dress robe had more of a Chinese cut to it as there were little flower imprints on her dress robe. Luna still had her usual airy appearance. Neville's robe was simple and preferred the attention on Luna than him.

Ginny on the other hand had attracted attention because she looked like an angel. The way she moved and looked in her white robes made her look like she was gliding on air and whenever there was

bright light around her the blue glitter made it look like there were fireflies floating around her. She wore all three of her accessories which was subtle enough not to take away from the dress but just the right to accent her dress and Ginny's physical attributes.

Harry sent a note with Nightlight telling the group to go ahead to the Ball and I will meet them there. He said that it took him longer to decorate the Great Hall and was running late. Harry did promise Ginny that he would be there when her secret admirer show up.

The group made there way down towards the Great Hall but had to wait outside of the Great Hall with the rest of the students. Dumbledore showed up with the heads of the four houses along with Remus and Tonks. The rest of the staff was watching over the rest of the school to make sure everything was fine.

Dumbledore raised his hand for everybody to quiet down and when he had the attention of everybody gathered, he said, "Outside of Mr. Potter, nobody has been inside of the Great Hall to see what has been beyond these doors. I know that Professor Lupin and Tonks were here to help him but their job was to guard the doors so nobody will come inside of the Great Hall. Now for the first time and hopefully the start of a new tradition here at Hogwarts, I present to you the Winter Ball with this year's theme of 'An Endless Night.'" Dumbledore raised his hands and the doors to the Great Hall opened to what seemed like another world.

The Great Hall looked like it was a crystal cave. All of the crystals were either white, light blue, light pink, or light purple. The colored crystals only had a hint of its respective color for white dominated the cave. There were lots of crystals hanging randomly around the Great Hall with the exception of the cleared area over the dance floor which was directly in the middle of everything. The dance floor looked like it was ice but didn't have the slippery nature of ice. There were smaller round tables scattered in the area around the dance floor and the walls on three sides. The tables and chairs were also white with what looked like glittery material that lightly covered everything. Over the area where the Head Table usually sits an elevated stage took its place extending all the way to the dance floor. The ceiling over the dance floor also looked like it was made of ice but had two banners

hanging from it side by side. One banner had the Weasley Family Crest on it and the other one was white.

On each place setting on the table there was a gift to each person who attended the Ball. The gift was an ice goblet that never melted and wasn't cold to the touch. On the goblet's stem were engraved the names of the couples that chose to take that seat and on the main part of the goblet, the engraving 'An Endless Night' sparkled. There were two groups on the stage. The banners 'Wizarding Quartet' and 'Weird Sisters' hung along the base of the stage. The Wizarding Quartet played the slow songs and Weird Sisters played the more upbeat songs. The two groups took half an hour alternating shifts with the Weird Sisters starting to play when the doors to the Great Hall was opened. The option of buffet style meals and table ordering was available with the House Elves acting like waiters and waitresses. A photographer was also available at the rear of the Great Hall to take pictures of couples or groups that wanted to commemorate the evening.

Hermione, Ron, Ginny, Luna, and Neville decided to take a table near the dance floor that had three extra seats for Ginny's admirer and Harry with his date. The group had just taken their seats when they were interrupted by the familiar taunting of a platinum blond Slytherin.

Draco was standing on the dance floor next to the stable with Pansy on his arm and sneered, "Well, it looks like the little red weasel was stood up. Although, it shouldn't be a surprise because he probably ran away when he finally saw how ugly she looks."

The Gryffindors were already on their feet before Draco finished and Ron said, "Go sod yourself. From what I hear, ferrets like to do that."

Ginny and Hermione had their wands out and Hermione said, "I advise the two of you to leave or I'll have to deduct points and give each of you detentions."

Pansy turned to her and said, "Stay out of this mudblood or we will end it for you."

Hermione asked, "Is that a threat?"

Draco said, "Looks like we're going to have to teach the disgraceful weasels, the mudblood, and let's throw in Longbottom and Loony just to have more fun."

Tonks just happened to be passing by and asked, "Is there a problem?"

Draco highly annoyed said, "No," than whispered to Hermione, "We'll teach you a lesson later." He walked away with Pansy who was glaring at the group.

After the Slytherins left, Tonks turned to Ginny and said, "Well, on a different note. I think that there is somebody that wants to meet you Ginny. He's about to come in and asks to meet you in the center of the dance floor. He's going to be wearing dark blue robes with his hood up. He wants you to be the first to know who he is."

With that Tonks walked towards Remus who was standing near the doors to the Great Hall. Ginny looked around expectantly but didn't see anything unusual. Hermione said, "Go ahead Ginny. We'll be here for you." The rest of them nodded and Ginny went to the center of the dance floor just under the banners.

When Ginny made it to the center, she stared at the doors to the Great Hall expectantly but nervous to find out whom he is. There was a thick fog similar to what Dry Ice produces but was thick enough to go up to the knees. Slowly a few steps in front of Ginny a figure started to rise from the fog like he was being lift upwards. He was wearing dark blue dress robes with a hint of white glitter that trimmed the outfit. She was startled at first but took a few steps back as everybody stared at the figure rising from the white cloud.

He stood tall and seemed confident but in reality he was a bit nervous. He didn't really want to draw so much attention but wanted this to be a moment that Ginny could remember and proclaim to the school that he liked Ginny. After he finally rose to his normal height, the cloud slowly disappeared. He slowly walked towards Ginny and raised his

hand out to her. Ginny took the hand and he slowly spun her around so that her back was to him but she was leaning up against him.

They slowly walked backwards until they could clearly see the banners hanging over them. He conjured a block and Ginny stood up on it. He reached into his pocket and pulled out his wand and handed it to her. She stood up on the block with his wand as he ran his hand along her arm until his hand was over hers and pointed towards the white banner. This moment was so familiar to her. It reminded her of the night under the stars with Harry. He said, "Who do you want to be your secret admirer?"

Ginny knew that voice and was hopeful but too scared to say it and not be him. He sensed this and said, "Don't worry. You have nothing to be scared of. Just point the wand and say, 'I am here with the one I want.'

Ginny whispered the words, "I am here with the one I want," while the wand was pointed at the white banner.

The white banner fell to the floor. Sparks fell down from where the banner was just hanging and another banner slowly unrolled itself next to the banner with the Weasley Family Crest on it. The first thing recognizable about the banner was that it was red and gold. Than all of a sudden, a large bright flash of light emitted from the banner which temporarily blinded everybody and when everybody's eyes recovered. One banner was the Weasley banner while the other banner was the Potter banner.

Harry still wearing the hood said, "I've been waiting for this moment for a very long time."

Ginny turned around quickly and whispered, "Harry?" while she pushed his hood off his head.

Harry nodded and bright vibrant green eyes stared into mesmerizing brown eyes. Ginny jumped up and hugged him so tight that he found it a bit hard to breathe but didn't mind it one bit just as long as it was Ginny who was hugging him. After she released him, He said, "I take it that you're glad that it was me."

Ginny smiled at him while hitting him on the arm saying, “I can’t believe that you misled me like that.”

Harry who was smiling back mocked being hurt by rubbing his arm where she just hit him and said, “I wanted this night to be yours. This was all planned for some time and it was meant for you. Everybody else here are just extras to help fill the empty space.” Harry looked up to the stage and nodded to the Wizarding Quartet to start playing a slow song. He looked back to Ginny and asked, “May I have this dance?”

Ginny said, “Of course you can Mr. Potter but I thought that you hated to dance.”

Harry said, “I didn’t like to dance before but I guess I’m fine with it now. Tonks has been giving me private lessons. Actually all of this was part of Remus and Tonks’ idea. They said this would be much more memorable to you.”

Ginny stood on her toes, gave him a kiss on his cheek, then said, “I agree and thank you for all of this Harry. I would never have thought anybody would do this for me.”

Harry walked Ginny to the center of the dance floor and said, “I would do anything for you.”

Ginny leaned against Harry’s chest while the two of them danced to the slow song that started playing just after Harry’s nod. What Ginny didn’t know was that Harry had one last tick up his sleeve. Everybody in the Great Hall stared at the couple as they danced. The guys were in amazement for what Harry did for Ginny and hopeful that their dates and girlfriends did not want them to go through the same thing while the girls were in a dream state wishing that they were the one being treated like her. The two of them continued to dance and Harry subtly flick of his wrist and the two of them slowly lifted into the air as they danced. Underneath their feet a single fluffy cloud formed where they were standing on and lifted them about ten feet off the ground.

Ginny broke the comfortable silence, looked up into Harry's eyes while they were still dancing by saying, "I've wanted to do this for such a long time."

Ginny slowly leaned towards back up to him and Harry slowly tilted and lowered his head down to hers. The moment just seemed right. To the two of them there was nobody left in the Great Hall and it was just the two of them on a cloud together. Their lips were millimeters apart and slowly their lips met. They tasted the salty taste on each other's lips as all the emotion, passion, and energy from the two of them were transferred to each other. They felt each other's emotion and all the energy fused and what seemed like fireworks exploded all around them. To everybody else in the Great Hall all they saw was a passionate kiss and the two of them started glowing different colors as colored sparks flew from the cloud that they were floating on.

Somebody started to clap than all of a sudden most of the Great Hall was clapping and cheering for the two of them. There were whistles and yells of congratulations to the new couple. The two of them slowly pulled apart and didn't hear a single sound that was going on around them. Harry said, "It was well worth the wait."

Ginny nodded, gave him another quick kiss on the lips, and said, "Yes it was."

The two of them slowly became more aware of what was going on around them as they started to notice all the noise that was going on around them. The cloud slowly lowered them back down and when their feet met the ground the cloud disappeared. The Weird Sisters started to play a fast paced song and more couples headed onto the dance floor and started dancing. Harry and Ginny walked over to where the rest of their friends were at waiting for them to arrive.

When they got there Ron was the first to speak up in an accusatory tone said, "So you're the bloody coward that was afraid to come out in the open."

Hermione turned to Ron and yelled, "Language Ron. He is your best friend after all." She than came over and hug both Harry and Ginny. Soon afterwards Neville and Luna came up to offer their

congratulations also with Neville hugging Ginny and giving Harry a handshake while Luna hugged both of them. Ron was the last to come up and said to Harry, "You better treat her right Harry. She's my baby sister and I will not allow her to be hurt."

Harry offered his hand to Ron who took it and shook it when he said, "Ron, I promise you that I will do everything I can to make sure that Ginny isn't hurt. But you know how things are around me so I can't promise that she will never get hurt." He turned to Ginny and said, "Ginny, what I feel right now can not be compared to anything that I've felt close to happiness before. But I don't want to put you in danger or at least no more danger than you are now. I will understand though if you don't want to turn this into anything more than it is now or want to break it off."

At first Ginny was hurt that Harry did not want her with him but realized what he was leading to. In a series tone, she said, "Harry, I've stood by and seen you go through hell and back. Not to mention the years where you didn't notice that I was even alive." Harry wanted to say something but she stopped him and continued saying, "This was what I wanted for such a long time. Now that I have you I will not give you up no matter what the dangers may be." She paused a moment than continued on saying, "I understand what the dangers are Harry. I'm just as much danger as Hermione and Ron here just for being your friend and I know that it is no secret that the two of us have been becoming very good friends over this school year. I also understand that this might actually elevate me just below you on You-Know-Who's hit list. But I am willing to go through with it and if you dare to try to stop me now than I hope you are ready to be hexed to eternity."

Harry sighed then said, "I understand Ginny. I do want to be with you and I surely don't want to face your Bat Boogey Hex." With that he smiled just a bit and said, "I will love to spend time with you and be with you." He paused, looked deeply into her eyes, held her hands, and said, "Ginny, will you do me the honor of being my girlfriend and make me the happiest wizard in the world?"

Ginny tip toed up again, leaned in, and gave him another long lingering kiss.

After recovering from the daze, Harry said, "I take that as a yes than."

Ginny nodded and hit him in the shoulder again. Harry made a pouting face while rubbing his shoulder. All of them laughed at Harry was looking like a fool.

Ron was the first to recover and said, "Well, I guess I don't have to really worry about Ginny considering she's going to be the one in charge of the relationship. To think, Harry can face You-Know-Who countless times but is afraid of my sister."

This made the group burst into another fit of laughter. After the laughter died down, Harry and Ginny were holding hands and sat down to another wave of congratulations to being an official couple. Ginny touched the ice goblet in front of her and the names Ginny Weasley and Harry Potter suddenly appeared on the goblet. Harry picked up his goblet and it was already engraved sense Ginny touched her goblet first. He turned to look at Ginny who was staring at the goblet. He was thinking, 'This is just how it is supposed to be. She's a perfect angel and the most beautiful, talented, caring, and bold witch in the entire world. I wonder why is it that she chose me for being so bad to her for so long but I will not let this go. She's giving me a chance and I will not mess it up.' He asked her, "What are you thinking?"

She held the goblet up to him, pointed to their engraved names, and said, "This is how it is supposed to be. The two of us, side by side."

Harry leaned in, gave her a kiss, and then said, "I agree. This is exactly how it should be."

The two of them were pulled into the conversation that was going on around the table. Many people came by to congratulate the two of them and say hi to the entire table. That evening they danced many times. The two of them enjoyed a buffet meal because they were afraid to request anything from the house elves with Hermione sitting there staring daggers at those that were ordering the house elves. The two of them found it comical while Ron just shook his head, kept his mouth shut, because he finally learned to stay out of Hermione's

way when her mind is set on something. Neville and Luna stumbled about on the dance floor a few times but enjoyed the evening. With the exception of the incident with Draco at the beginning of the Ball, they wouldn't want the evening to go any other way.

The evening ended to the groans and complaints of many of the couples left in the Great Hall. The three Gryffindor couples made their way back to their private suite where the wizards bid their respective witches goodnight and in return each received a goodnight kiss. The three girls went to their room and have a little bit of giggling. They changed into their sleeping clothes and went to sleep. The guys spent the rest of the night in silence with Neville and Ron sleeping in the room while Harry headed down to his trunk, changed into sleep clothing down there, and went to an easy sleep with a smile on his face. That same smile was on his friends' faces also especially Ginny who went to sleep with the thought, 'He's mine.'

A/N: I know that many people were right that Harry was the admirer and glad that he was. I was so tempted to turn it into Malfoy's cruel joke on Ginny but didn't want every single review to be a flame so decided to stick with Harry as the admirer. So mystery number one is complete. Believe it or not but this is not the heart of the story. The heart of the story lies in how is the one that is spying on him and who is the one that poisoned him. That will be revealed soon enough and I've been writing like crazy lately so I'll be posting at an extremely quick rate of one a day until I get stuck. Because of the quick posting that will happen I won't be responding to reviews during this time but will be reading them. If you do have a question then feel free to ask and I'll answer it if it is not going to be revealed in a posting that will happen soon.

Chapter 20

The Week After

The next morning Harry woke up with the same smile that was on his face when he went to sleep. He went down to the Quidditch pitch to go through his normal work out routine with the single thought of what can he do for Ginny. By the end of his workout session he still couldn't come up with an answer but was greeted to a pleasant surprise when he was done. Ginny was sitting in the stands watching him workout dressed in some exercise clothing. Ginny made her way down while Harry headed over to her. They gave each other a quick kiss. They held each others hands while heading back to Gryffindor tower to get ready for the day.

On their way back, Harry said, "You know, I will never get used to that."

Ginny asked, "What is it that you won't get used to?"

"It's just the whole kissing and affection thing. I've grown up most of my life without a single hug or compliment. I mean the first hugs I've gotten were from your mum and that was a motherly one or from you and Hermione which were at least at the time sisterly. It just seems like everything is starting to be good for me and I feel as if I don't deserve it. It's just so different. It's like a dream and I'll wake up in my room at the Dursleys and it's just the first day of the summer holidays."

Ginny stopped him, looked up into his eyes and saw happiness and that hint of doubt that he is drawing from, silently cursed the Dursleys, and said, "I'm not sure what to say but you do deserve to live a happy life even though most of your life was far from it. I've been chasing after you for so long that I guess a reason why all of my previous relationships didn't have a chance is because I'm head over heels for you. I meant what I said before about not letting you go. I've got you now Harry and I won't give you up. I'll help you get through these doubts that you have and no matter what I'll always be here," she placed the palm of her hands over his heart while continuing on saying, "I'll always be in your heart as a friend, now as a girlfriend, and who knows where this may go."

He nodded placed his hand over her hand that was covering his heart and said, "Thanks Gin. I'm not sure where I'll be without you. A few months back I said something that I meant. I am a bit nervous about what will happen when your family finds out. It's not a pleasant thought. The thought of having all of your brothers chasing after me minus Ron but I think that Ron is a bit hesitant about me also even if I am his best friend. I don't think that anybody can deny that somehow I attract more trouble than everybody here at school combined."

Ginny took his hand and the two of them continued to walk back to the castle when she said, "Like I said before, I know the risks of being your girlfriend. I don't care about the risks and if V-Vol-Voldemort is stupid enough to chase after me and I'll give him the beating of his life. Plus my family loves you Harry and there's no question about that." Harry was grinning like an idiot. Ginny asked, "What are you smiling at now?"

Harry replied, "You said his name. You finally said Voldemort."

"Well, I guess if he shows up than you'll chase him away. Given the record between the two of you, I'll put my galleons on you any day on a show down." There was a pause then he asked, "How come you're dressed ready to exercise?"

She said, "I was thinking about joining you for your morning workout but I woke up a little too late. By the time I woke up and got ready, you were already gone and from what I could tell had completed a few laps already so I decided to just watch you and let you have your moment of peace."

"Gin, really the only reason why I workout alone is because it has always been too early for anybody to join me. Ron will not wake up unless he smells food, Hermione prefers to spend her time reading, and well I heard about the difficulties of getting you up in the morning."

Ginny indignantly said, "I am not hard to wake up in the morning."

Harry raised his hands in mock surrender said, "I'm just kidding. Do you want to join me in the morning?"

"You are mine now Harry and I intent to make sure everybody know it especially those that mocked me for years about my crush on you plus I would like to spend as much time with you as possible. It's moments like this that I like to do so much. You and me just talking like this. Harry did you know that all school year I always looked forward to moments for the two of us just being together?"

"In all honesty, I do also that's why I'm always waiting for you and looking for you between classes and during meal times."

The two of them spent the rest of the day in seclusion down in Harry's trunk. They spent their time talking and teasing each other which occasionally resulted in some chasing around the trunk. Almost everybody in the castle was ecstatic about the two of finally becoming a couple. The few that were not mainly resided in Slytherin House and the others were either infatuated with Harry or Ginny but more or less happy that the two of them are happy. Everything was just great for the two of them and Kayla was filled in on what happened the night of the Ball. The group showed Kayla what happened by using a pensieve. For the next few days everything was peaceful and carefree for all the students in the castle. Ginny joined Harry on his morning workouts and with some persuasion she started to join Harry and Kayla during practice whenever she was free.

The group was sitting at the Gryffindor Table enjoying their dinner while talking happily to one another. They were down near the edge of the table close to the Head Table. The Great Hall was filled with the usual joyful banter of many students while some were reading a book or magazine, others immersed in their food, and most importantly enjoying dinner like a student should.

The peace of the Great Hall was interrupted with Nightlight appearing just after a burst of blue and white flames. Nightlight dropped a letter for Harry and settled onto his shoulder. Harry picked up the letter which was a quick short note that was part of a system that Harry had designed to alert him if there was trouble. If there was trouble than a

phoenix would go to Potter Mansion and retrieve the appropriate letter and bring it to him immediately. The note read.

York under attack! Moony Center in danger!

Many of the eyes in the Great Hall were on the blue and white phoenix. Without thinking, Harry jumped up, pulled out his wand, and yelled, "Summon!"

Blaze, Sunrise, and Sunset all appeared out of nowhere in front of Harry in the middle of the aisle. Nightlight jumped off of Harry's shoulder and was floating in the air with Sunrise and Sunset. Harry tapped himself with his wand and said, "Battle Robes!"

The Gryffindor robes that Harry wore disappeared and a set of all black robes covered him. He also had a black cloak on with the word 'Potter' in silver running along his shoulders. The front of his cloak was open with and showed a white shirt underneath and white pants. The cloak ran down the length of his body to his ankle and was held together with red cords joining both sides along his upper body to his waist.

Harry was in his own world and said to his animal friends, "I want you all to go to the Moony Center and start evacuations to the Prongs Center. Nightlight you're with me."

Before they could leave, Ginny had grabbed Harry's hand and asked, "What's going on Harry?"

Harry said impatiently, "I don't have time to talk about this. York is being attacked and the Moony Center is in its line of fire. I'm getting the evacuation of the orphans out. I'll let you know how it goes."

Ginny said, "I'm coming with you."

Harry was about to reply when all of his friends stood up and Ron said, "We're coming along also."

Harry shook his head while saying, "Nobody is coming along. This should be a quick extraction and if you all come than there will be

more people to get out of there. This has to be done as quickly as possible.” He didn’t wait for a reply. While he was saying that, he was already reaching for Nightlight’s tail feather and the three phoenixes, one wizard, and one white tiger disappeared.

The group appeared on the front lawn of a building that looked just like the Prongs Center. They made their way into the building where they saw all the kids were lined up in front of the fireplace waiting to go through as the staff was making their final checks on the building and confirming that all the children are together. Once Harry made it into the building, there were five wands pointed at him and Harry immediately raised his hands to show that he was not there to harm them and said, “I’m Harry Potter. I’ve come to help you all get to the Prongs Center.”

Ms. Linda Grant, the director of the network of orphanages, came forward and asked, “If you really are Mr. Potter than who is and how old is his friend at the orphanage?”

Harry said, “Anna Thymes and she is eight now.”

Ms. Grant said, “Lower your wands. It really is Harry Potter and he’s here to help.” She turned to Harry and said, “We could use your help to get the kids out safely.”

Harry nodded and said, “Blaze, Sunrise, and Sunset will be the safest way to get them to the Prongs Center. Sunrise and Sunset will start taking the children two at a time while Blaze takes a few adults at first to inform the Prongs Center of what is happening and receive the children on the other side. You all will appear by the common area at the main entrance to the Prongs Center. I suggest that the two counselors go on ahead to receive the children while everybody else that can defend this place keep your wand out and form a perimeter around the building.”

Ms. Grant said, “Alright you all heard the plan. Counselors prepare to go and make sure you have the children’s history records with you.” She turned to the children and said, “Alright children, there’s nothing to worry about. When the phoenixes lower their tail feathers to you

grab on and it will take you to safety. Don't worry; everything is safe especially since Harry is with us."

The kids stared at Harry when she mentioned him. Harry walked over and told the kids, "Don't worry. I promise that I will do everything I can to make sure you all will stay safe and return everything to normal as soon as possible." He ended with a comforting smile and the children felt less nervous and scared just to know that Harry Potter is there with them.

Shortly after the return of the counselors the evacuation started. It didn't take more than half an hour with the rapid extraction that every child was safe at the Prongs Center and the adults were almost done leaving. Ms. Grant was the last one left and she turned to Harry to say, "Thanks Harry for all of your help. I'll see you soon at the Prongs Center."

Harry nodded and said, "You go on ahead and I'll go around the place and secure the building than I'll meet you over there."

She said, "I'll help you do that."

He replied, "Don't worry about it. It shouldn't take too long and it would be better if you were with the children to calm them and restore order over there. I'll send Sunrise to stay watch over you all tonight while Sunset will keep watch over the Lily Center. Blaze will watch over the Padfoot Center. Nightlight will stay with me and after I leave if they storm this building than it will fall with no casualties and hostages."

Ms. Grant reluctantly agreed and in a burst of red flames left with Sunrise. Harry checked all of the rooms one last time and was about to start adding wards to the building when he heard some large explosions coming from outside. He ran out the Moony Center and looked down about half a block to see many wizards and/or witches with black cloaks and white masks dueling with various wizards and witches.

Meanwhile back at Hogwarts, just after Harry left, anarchy was starting to break out. Word spread quickly that Deatheaters were

attacking York. The students that had family or friends in York were getting worried and received comforting words from their friends. Ginny was both worried and angry at him for putting himself in danger again. The same feelings were shared by Hermione, Kayla, and Luna. Neville was just worried while Ron was angry that his best friend would leave him behind. There were loud talks and some yells from students to either gain control or what should be done. The discussions of what should be done were coming mainly from DA members.

Dumbledore shot sparks out from the edge of his wand that was accompanied by a high pitch shrilling sound similar to fireworks which got the attention of the students in the Great Hall. Dumbledore was standing at the center of the Head Table when he said, "Prefects will escort their houses back to the dormitories." The students started to file out of the Great Hall. Dumbledore turned to his staff and said, "Remus, Nymphadora, Minerva, Severus, and Poppy please follow me to my office. Everybody else please patrol the castle and Hagrid stay near the castle."

The Gryffindors had just made it into the tower when Harry's friends were about to walk into their own common room when Lavender said, "I wonder if they're going to broadcast anything about it on the WWN." The WWN was the wizarding wireless network which was similar to a muggle radio.

None of the Gryffindors left and waited for Lavender to return with her radio. She came back and turned the knob and raised the volume as loud as possible for everyone to hear. Everyone took seats around the radio and stared at it like something miraculous was about to happen. They heard a male voice on the WWN say, "The song just now was the latest number one hit from the Weird Sisters. Hold on a minute we have some late breaking news." There was a pause than the announcer could be heard asking somebody, "Are you for sure that York is under attack?"

After a moment he said, "Sorry about the interruption everybody out there listening but we have just received word that York is under attack. We are going to switch you over to our correspondent that just arrived in York and will tell you the blow by blow as he sees it. We

warn you ahead of time that what you hear may be inappropriate for kids for what we are about to broadcast is live and unedited. We switch you over to our field correspondent Leo Mariana."

The sounds of spells being yelled, screams of those being hit, and explosions could be heard in the background when Leo Mariana said, "This is Leo Mariana your field reporter with the WWN. I have just arrived here at York in what looks like a battle field. There are many buildings crumbled to the ground but the fighting seems to be restricted to the wizarding area of town. Lots of smoke could be rising from some of the collapsed areas of town and little fires could be seen around the fighting area going unchecked. From what I see right now there are approximately fifteen Deatheaters going up against what looks like ten wizards. There looks to be a few witches with children who are trying to find some place safe to run to. It is just chaos. There is only one word that can describe the scene here which is 'chaos.' Let's see if we can get a closer look to the fighting but it looks like if they don't get some help soon than these good witches and wizards along with these children out here will not make it."

For a short while all that could be heard was heavy breathing like somebody was running. Than Leo's voice could be heard again. He said, "I am now about half a block away from where the heaviest fighting is taking place. I'm near the newly established orphanage and from what I can tell there is a wizard with what looks like a blue and white bird helping women and children escape. Hold on, it is, yes it is a blue and white phoenix. The wizard is escorting the women and children and let's sees where he is sending them."

Ginny said, "That has to be Harry and that has to be Nightlight with him. When he gets back I'm going to give him the beating of his life."

Everybody else was afraid to say anything because they knew that this girl was both worried and angry at the same time and didn't want to take the chance of hitting the angry part. Leo's voice came back, "We are now in the orphanage and there is a short line of women and children leaving through the floo network. Some parents are sending their children through the floo network and apparating to their destination. It seems like people are heading to anywhere they think

would be safe may it be a family or friend's house or a public area. There are a few wizards who are hugging and kissing their wives and children. It looks like they are sending them off and returning to the fight to help their friends and neighbor defend their homes. I see a three people looking like they are saying their goodbyes. This is definitely not an easy sight to see. Let's listen in to what is going on."

A man's voice could be heard saying, "Alright, William, I want you to go to the Ministry with mum and from there go to Grandma's place. If anything should happen to mum on the way I want you to go on ahead."

Tears could be heard when the man was talking and a sniffing child's voice replied, "I want to stay with you dad. I don't want to leave you alone."

The man's voice replied, "It will be alright. I am just going to make sure everybody else's family gets out safely. You're the man of the family now, take care of mum and I'll see you either tonight or tomorrow morning. Always remember that I love you William."

There was a pause than a woman's voice could be heard pleading, "Love, please come with us."

The man's voice said, "I will be with you all soon. Our friends and neighbors are hurt out there right now and I have to help them just like I know that they would help us if something were to happen to us." A short pause than the same voice continued to say, "Go to my parent's house and stay there. Use the floo at the Ministry to switch over to my parent's house. Go on ahead and don't worry with Harry Potter here we have a fighting chance."

Harry's voice could be heard but not directed to anybody in particular saying, "The Deatheaters are about to arrive at the orphanage soon. I want all the women and children to hurry up and leave. If you are staying than prepare to fight because it looks like there are about 20 Deatheaters on this street now."

The woman's voice from before was pleading, "Mr. Potter, I know this is asking much of you but please make sure that my husband returns safely."

Harry replied, "Please call me Harry. I promise you that I will do my best to help everybody return safely but I can not promise you anything. The odds are against us but I will help those willing to defend their homes and business but most importantly the people to find safety."

The woman's voice said, "Thank you Harry."

Harry's voice could be heard speaking again and from what it sounds like to the woman's child. Harry said, "Don't worry little one, I will do everything I can here to bring your dad home."

The man's voice was heard again saying, "Now please go and remember that I love you all. Please stay safe."

The woman's and child's voice was heard saying, "I love you too."

Screams of 'Diagon Alley', 'Hogsmeade', or 'Ministry of Magic' could be heard going on in the background. As the departure through the floo network increased at a more rapid pace, Harry said loudly, "If you are staying than form a perimeter around the orphanage and we will slowly make our way out from here and start our counter attack against the Deatheaters. I want five volunteers to stay here and protect the orphanage and the people as they try to floo to safety. Everybody else move out!"

There were lots of noises going on in the background as people ran to take their positions around the orphanage grounds or the building. The crowd around the floo network grew as more and more people poured into the orphanage seeking safety. The reporter started broadcasting again and he said, "What you just heard was a family of three saying their farewells. The young man's voice you heard giving out the commands was none other than Harry Potter. He was outside when we arrived and from what we could tell he was trying to erect some protection wards for the orphanage. There is now only one way in and out of the orphanage. Hold on a moment." There was a pause

but the noise in the background could still be heard. The reporter continued on saying, "There are about fifteen wizards here with five in the building and entrance while everybody else has taken up position around the orphanage. Harry Potter is getting ready to lead the counter attack. We will be following Harry Potter around and pray that everybody returns safely. Let's go."

The sound of the reporter running could be heard and from what could be heard, there was another man with the reporter. As the reporter got closer to Harry, Harry could be heard saying, "I want everybody to do as little fighting as possible. Search for survivors and especially the injured and try to get them here to transport to safety. I'll try to draw the Deatheaters towards me. So good luck and hopefully, we'll see each other again after this fight. After my first explosion curse than everybody start to do what you were told. Are there any questions?"

There was no reply then Harry said, "Good luck and God Speed."

Harry's Point of View

Harry was looking at a few wizards standing in front of him and after a pause he said, "Good luck and God Speed."

He turned to the reporter and said, "Look, I don't know who you are and what you plan to accomplish here but this is no time to bother anybody here. There are people dying out there so you can either help or stay out of the way."

The reporter said, "We're here to report the news Mr. Potter. We have no intention of getting in the way. This is what our job requires and we intend to follow it through."

Harry shook his head and took off down the street towards the Deatheaters. He hid behind a large trash dumpster with the reporter following him and whispering into what he took as a microphone. Harry looked around the dumpster and saw three Deatheaters heading towards them. He flicked his wrist and one of his rose wands came out into his right hand. Harry pointed it just in front of the Deatheaters and said, "Reducto!"

The blast knocked the three Deatheaters into the air and blew them back. Blood could be seen flowing from them as they were in the air. Harry looked back to the orphanage and saw the band of wizards start to spread out in pairs to start their search and rescue. That attracted the attention of more Deatheaters and Harry fired a few more explosion curses at them. A few of the Deatheaters went down but most of them were able to summon shields to protect themselves.

Harry came from behind the dumpster and a Deatheater saw him. Harry yelled out at them, "Get out of here all of you and tell your coward of a master that if he wants a fight than he should come find me instead of attacking innocent people!"

The Deatheater that saw him spoke in a childish girly voice that he heard before. The witch said, "Well if it isn't the little itty baby. Are you a big boy now? Does the itty bitty baby want to join his godfather?"

Harry's anger erupted when he yelled, "Bellatrix, I am going to kill you if that is the last thing I do."

With that the three Deatheaters along with Bellatrix charged at Harry. Harry flicked his left wrist and both of his rose wands were showing. Harry raised both hands, letting his anger erupt, charged at the Deatheaters, yelling, "Reducto!" He kept on yelling the explosion curses over and over again.

Bellatrix managed to summon a shield quick enough to absorb the spells that were heading towards her but the Deatheaters that accompanied her weren't quick enough or lucky enough to dodge the full brunt of the spell which left them panting their last breathes if they weren't going to get some help quickly. Bellatrix was surprised with the amount of power behind the spell and decided to stop charging and just hold her ground until help can arrive. Her taunting ended because Harry was hammering her and her team so hard that they had to use all of their concentration on their shield charms because they saw a few of their comrades go down as their shields broke down.

Harry managed to stop the Deatheaters from getting closer to the orphanage and was successful in attracting all of the attention of every Deatheater there. The rescue party was still running back and forth searching for people and bringing back the wounded and lost. The Deatheaters then changed their strategy and alternated sending hexes at Harry which resulted in a nonstop volley of fire. Harry had to halt his assault on the Deatheaters and spent most of his time summoning shields after shields with the occasional hex but was more concerned with not getting hit with the crippling curses. At first it seemed awkward that nobody was sending a killing curse at him until he heard a Deatheater yell, "Remember to bring Potter back alive."

Harry lasted for about ten minutes but to him seemed like an eternity when a hex finally got through when he was focusing on the volley coming from another area. The red curse came from his left and hit him in his left arm. Harry's battle robes and protection charms that he was wearing absorbed most of the impact but it did manage to slow down Harry just long enough for a volley of curses to either hit him or somewhere near him.

Harry's battle robe and protection charm helped him again which was the only reason why Harry was still able to stand even if he was about to fall down if the wind blew hard enough. The Order of the Phoenix showed up shortly afterwards led by Dumbledore with Tonks, Remus, Hestia Jones, Emmeline Vance, Mad-Eye Moody, Kingsley, Bill, Charlie, and Arthur. They apparated to the orphanage and after asking a few of the wizards rushing back and forth they started to rush to where they said they last saw Harry.

They managed to get there just in time to see Harry get assaulted with spells after spells and still stand afterwards. The Deatheaters seemed to be frozen stiff at how a teenager can withstand all of those spells and stand. They didn't know that it was because of the battle robes and the items that Harry was wearing that came from his family vault. To them it just seemed impossible and some started to show fear of how to fight against somebody so strong. The Order sent a volley of spells that hit their marks which bought the Deatheaters back to reality. Now the remaining Deatheaters were either escaping

or grabbing one of their fallen members before leaving at the sight of Dumbledore in his fury and Order members standing next to him.

While staggering on his feet, Nightlight showed up, grabbed Harry by the claws, and carried him back to the front lawn of the orphanage while the Order was securing the area. After laying Harry down on his back, Nightlight stood over him and was dropping tears after tears on various parts of his body that were injured and damaged. Harry's body was instantly healing itself at an incredibly fast rate that by the time Remus, Tonks, Bill, and Charlie found him, he felt like he was operating at about 85.

Harry was standing up and his mutilated cloak and battle robes were floating in the air. Harry saw the Order members rushing towards him but didn't really want to hear all of their yelling that he knew that was about to come so he walked into the orphanage to see how everybody was doing. He saw that the orphanage was crowded with the injured and saw the man that he was talking to before the fight started that sent his wife and son to his mother's home while the reporter was listening in on the family moment. Harry approached him and asked, "Excuse me sir, it's good to know that your wife and child has a husband and father that is returning to them. I'm Harry." Harry offered his hand.

The man shook Harry's hand and said, "Thank for your help Mr. Potter. I'm William Smith Sr. But please call me William."

Harry said, "Please call me Harry. I'm glad that I was of help. How are you doing? Are you hurt?"

William replied, "I'm fine. How are you Harry? I heard you took a pretty nasty beating back there."

"I was hit pretty hard but Nightlight lent me some of her tears which helped me recover. I'm getting much better though as we speak. How is everybody though? Did all of the rescuers survive and what are the town casualties?"

There was a pause as William considered the answer then said, "The last that I know of all of the rescuers that stayed back with you

survived because nobody engaged in the fight and carried out their job of search and rescue. You did a good job of distracting the Deatheaters so we were able to run around pretty freely. In general, there are twelve dead. Seven wizards, three witches, and two children died. Approximately thirty are wounded at last count but more are coming in. We did manage to get the critical ones transported to St. Mungos."

Harry shook his head because he felt like he could do something to help. Harry asked, "Where is everybody?"

"Most of the men are still out there searching for survivors and wounded. There's no telling yet how much damage the Deatheaters managed to do until you stopped them." He paused a moment like he was contemplating something really quick then said, "You helped us out more than you think Harry. Just because you showed up, it inspired others to stay and help. If you didn't stay I doubt that there would be more than five to stay behind and who knows how many more would be injured or dead. You did good here and we will never forget it."

At that moment Remus, Tonks, Charlie, and Bill came rushing through the front door and went straight for Harry. Remus was the first to speak to Harry. The anger in his voice was evident when he said, "Harry, what the hell do you think you are doing? Running out of the Great Hall like that and taking on every Deatheater that you can find. Do you know what was going through our minds when we saw you get hit with all of those spells?"

Harry said, "I'm sorry but the first thing that came to my mind was get here as quickly as possible and get the children out safely."

Tonks said, "I hope you're doing fine. I would prefer never to see you hit by that many spells again."

Harry replied, "I'm fine and don't worry. I don't plan on being beaten like that again."

Remus said, "I don't think you'll be going into a fight like that again anytime soon because I'm going to make sure you stay at Hogwarts

and only leave when I'm with you. Now we're going to head back to Hogwarts."

Harry shook his head and said, "I can't go back yet. I need to check on how the orphans are doing over at the Prongs Center."

Charlie interrupted them by saying, "Harry, you better go back to Hogwarts. We'll check up on the orphans for you. You're already in enough trouble as it is and I'm not talking about with Dumbledore because you're in trouble with him also. You better get back because that man," Charlie pointed to the reporter that was following Harry, "has been following you and reporting everything you've done to anybody who is listening on the WWN."

Bill continued where Charlie left off by saying, "If I'm correct than almost every student at Hogwarts have been listening in their dorm rooms or common rooms to the WWN and have heard everything that this man has been saying."

With his head in his hands and shaking his head, Harry said, "This isn't good. She's going to kill me."

Bill said, "You better get back and she might and I mean might take it easy on you. But I doubt that she will take it easy on you."

Harry said, "Alright, I'll go back to school." He turned to Nightlight and said, "Nightlight, will you stay here and make sure everybody is safe?" The phoenix let out a trill and flew out of the door to survey the area.

Dumbledore showed up with the rest of the members of the order and approached Harry. He asked him, "Harry, how are you?"

Harry told him, "I'm fine sir."

Dumbledore nodded then pulled a piece of parchment from the ground and with a tap of his wand said, "Portus!" He handed it to Harry and said, "I want you and Professors Remus and Tonks to go back to school. This portkey will take you to the Hospital Wing. Everybody else will stay here to help the wounded."

Harry sighed and took the parchment. Remus and Tonks placed a finger on the parchment and Remus counted down from three. They felt the familiar tug from the navel and appeared in the Hospital Wing. The three of them appeared in the Hospital Wing. As soon as they showed up, Madame Pomfrey seemed to be waiting for them and started shoving Harry into a bed. As soon as she managed to get Harry near the bed, the doors to the Hospital Wing slammed against the wall as it was forcefully opened to show Harry's close Gryffindor friends but most importantly a fiery red head witch that looked just about ready to murder.

She ran up to Harry and pulled him into a tight hug than pushed him onto the bed and yelled, "Harry James Potter! What do you think running off like that? Oh yes, we heard everything that happened that Bill and Charlie were talking about! You are going to pay Mr. Potter and I mean you will pay dearly for putting yourself in unnecessary danger like that and worrying us half to death. What are we supposed to think when the WWN correspondent says, 'Harry Potter was just hit by over fifteen spells at the same time.'?"

Kayla and Hermione came up and hugged him after Ginny finished her lecturing. After they let him go, Harry said, "I guess I wasn't thinking. The only thing on my mind was the children and to make sure that you all don't get hurt while I run off again."

Ginny's anger subsided a bit when he mentioned the orphans but she was still angry when she said, "Again? Do you honestly think that you will survive going through that again? I will kill you myself if you try to do that again." She softened up when she said, "Harry, we love you very much and don't want you to get hurt just like you don't want us to get hurt. Please don't do that again."

Harry pulled Ginny into a hug while saying, "I promise I'll try to think it through better next time. It was just so instinctive. I don't want to leave you either. It may seem too quick in our relationship to say this but we've been friends for much longer and it felt like we've dated all term if you really think about it but I love you Ginny and I promise to try to stay safe just so that I can be by you."

Ginny smiled and said, "I love you to Harry." She leaned into him and the two of them kissed.

They didn't stop doing that until Ron interrupted by saying, "I don't think that I can ever get used to that. The two of you can break it up now or else I'm going to have to call Bill and Charlie here to stop it for you."

Harry immediately pulled away and everybody laughed at him. Hermione said, "It's interesting that he'll go stare down fifteen Death eaters but the mention of the Weasley Clan and he'll go running."

The group laughed more at Harry's embarrassment. Madame Pomfrey interrupted the group by saying, "Alright everyone out. Mr. Potter here needs his rest after the stupid thing that he did."

Harry said, "I really feel much better and think I can get more rest in my own room. Please, if I do feel worse than I'll come back right away."

Madame Pomfrey replied, "You're not going anywhere this time Mr. Potter. You tried that with me at the beginning of the year and at that time I took you for a responsible adult but I was sorely mistaken in my opinion of you given what you did tonight. Now get back into bed and stay there."

Ginny asked Madame Pomfrey while giving her the most innocent little girl face that she can muster, "Madame Pomfrey, can I stay with him just tonight? I promise not to disturb him."

The doors to the Hospital Wing opened up again to reveal Dumbledore and McGonagall coming in. Dumbledore said, "If you all will excuse us but we have a few matters to discuss with Mr. Potter."

Harry was thinking, 'Yeah, discuss how you can control more of my life.' The request to stay was dropped immediately because Dumbledore's face was stern and so was McGonagall so there was no way she was going to get what she wanted although she wanted to stay with Harry but knew that Harry will tell her all about it later.

The group said bye to Harry and left leaving only Dumbledore, McGonagall, and Pomfrey.

Dumbledore asked Madame Pomfrey, "How is Mr. Potter doing?"

Pomfrey replied, "He seems to almost be at full health. His body is recovering at an incredibly fast rate. He should be ready for classes tomorrow."

Dumbledore nodded while McGonagall said, "Mr. Potter, we are very disappointed in you. Running off into danger like that, I thought that you had learned your lesson at the Ministry of Magic last year."

Those words hurt Harry because now he knew that they blamed him for the events at the end of last year their words of, 'it wasn't your fault,' and 'you shouldn't blame yourself for this,' were all lies. McGonagall started giving him a lecture but he pretty much tuned her out until the end when she said, "Detention for one week with me in the evening."

Dumbledore saw Harry's slight twitch in his eyes when McGonagall mentioned the Ministry of Magic and knew at that moment that the wound that separated him and Harry that started last year just grew wider. After McGonagall finished Dumbledore asked Harry, "Can you tell us what happened earlier, Harry?" He used the name Harry instead of Mr. Potter in an attempt to keep the blow from McGonagall from alienating him from the rest of the staff and in particular the Order of the Phoenix.

Harry didn't really care if they knew about the story or not since everybody else in the Wizarding world seem to know thanks to the reporter so he just told him what happened minus the system that Harry had set up to inform him of an attack that were to occur anywhere near the orphanages or Potter Mansion. Dumbledore noticed that Harry left that part out but decided not to question him on it because he knew that Harry would resist telling the Headmaster any secrets that Harry didn't want to tell. After Harry's story, the three adults left him for the night and Ginny snuck back by using Harry's invisibility cloak and talked while Ginny was on his hospital bed leaning on him while staring at the ceiling. The two of them talked up

till midnight then at Harry's urging Ginny left to get some sleep to be ready for classes the next day.

The next morning, Harry and his friends were all gathered at the Hufflepuff table with Anthony enjoying their breakfast. There were many that came by to tell Harry about what they heard on the WWN and wanted to praise him for saving the orphanage. The Great Hall was noisy due to all the excited chatted about the events of the previous night and for once there was no outlandish rumor that made absolutely no sense at all because too many of the students heard the events as it happened. All of a sudden, the noise started to die down and everybody's head turned to the doors to the Great Hall.

Harry wasn't sure what was going on so he asked Ginny, "Gin, do you know what's going on?"

Ginny said, "Harry do you know anything about the Death Messengers?"

"No, who are they?"

Ginny pointed to the doors to the Great Hall which had Dumbledore, Flitwick, and a man dressed in all black formal robes with a red sash running diagonally from his left shoulder to the right side of his waist. On the red sash where the sash covers the heart, there was a thick white vertical line.

Ginny said, "The man with the red sash is known as the Death Messenger. When he shows up that means somebody has died. He delivers the bad news to the family of the deceased."

Hermione said, "The red sash stands for the blood that was spilled and the white vertical line stands for hope. They are ministry employees that are only around during times of war."

Dumbledore, Flitwick, and the man walked over to a third year Ravenclaw that Harry didn't know. The man handed the boy a red envelope and said a few words that nobody could really hear except for those sitting around the kid. The boy broke down and started crying. His friends came over to console him. Professor Flitwick

stayed with the boy while, Dumbledore escorted the man out of the Great Hall.

Harry said, "I feel so sorry for him. I hope he didn't lose his entire family."

Luna lost her airy voice and in a sympathetic voice said, "We actually knew ahead of time that he had lost someone. We found out last night. He received an express owl with a message from his mother. She wanted to get the message to him before that idiot from the ministry shows up and makes a scene. He lost his baby sister in last night's attack. Apparently, his mum, dad, and baby sister were heading to the orphanage to evacuate but was hit by falling debris on their way to the orphanage. His dad was carrying the girl at the time and was hit in the back and fell down. We don't know how the baby died but the dad is still at St. Mungos and his mom is still with his dad."

Ron said, "He looked like he was doing better until the Death Messenger showed up."

Luna replied, "He was coping with it and his friends managed to finally get him to smile earlier this morning. I guess when the messenger showed up; all of his emotions from last night came back."

Harry said, "I feel so sorry for him. I wonder if there is something that we can do for him."

Luna said, "There's nothing really you can do."

Harry replied, "I hope it wasn't my spell that killed his baby sister. I wasn't really paying attention and was firing spells off like crazy anywhere the Deatheaters were standing."

Luna replied, "It wasn't your spell that caused it. It turned out that they made it past you and were being escorted by a wizard to help get them to safety. From what we were able to tell so far, it was a stray spell that was aimed at you that hit a building and you know the rest."

Harry's eyes instinctively closed as he took a few deep breaths. Ginny knew exactly what was running through his mind and placed a hand over his hand while saying, "Harry, it wasn't your fault. You did not fire that spell. If anything it was because of you that so many others are alive now."

Harry said, "We don't know that. For all we know the Deatheaters would have never attacked more of the village and left. But no, I had to show up and we know that I contributed to a baby girl's death."

Ginny replied, "You know that the Deatheaters would have done everything they could to kill every wizard, witch, and muggle."

Harry didn't reply. He just continued to stare at what was left of his breakfast. His friends were also at a loss of words. It was interrupted by the chiming of the bells to announce the start of the first classes that day. The hall dispersed very slowly and solemnly.

The castle returned back to normal for most students that evening except for the Ravenclaw that lost his sister and his friends who were helping him cope. Harry did start to feel a little better as the week went on with Ginny's help. There were no other sightings of the Death Messenger and for once the entire student body and staff agreed that that was a good thing.

A/N: I hope that you all liked this chapter also as this marks the beginning of the second part of the story and where the action will take off. It also seems like my mix up of the words 'then' and 'than', 'here' and 'hear', and 'there' and 'their' makes it a bit difficult to read. So, I'm now searching for a beta to read my stuff before hand. If you would like to be my beta then please let me know.

Chapter 21

Snape VS Dobby

Over the next few weeks, Harry managed to let go some of the self blame for what happened with the help of his friends and to a greater extent Ginny. The group was sitting in their common room as Hermione made her way into the room and sat next to Ron.

Hermione asked, "Is every body packed yet? The train is leaving early tomorrow so there won't be any time to pack in the morning, especially if you want to have breakfast before we leave."

Ginny responded for everybody saying, "Don't worry Hermione. We are already done packing. I already forced the guys to start their packing yesterday."

Hermione smiled then asked Harry, "Harry, what are the plans for the break? Are there any new developments?"

Harry said, "No, nothing new so far and hopefully not. You all are going to go to Grimmauld Place tomorrow after the train ride. Kayla will be going there as well. I'll take the train ride to the station and leave from the station to where I've stayed all summer long. In two days, I'll go and pick everybody and your parents up from Grimmauld place with help from Nightlight, Sunrise, Sunset, and Blaze. From there everybody will be spending the holidays together until two days after Christmas where I'll be heading over to America to meet up with Kayla. Kayla will stay with us until two days before Christmas where she will leave for the States to spend time with her mother. Well, at least that is the plan for now."

Hermione nodded her approval while Kayla said, "Harry, I wanted to talk to you about that. My mom wanted to spend some time in England so she was thinking about coming here for the holidays. Instead of you coming to see us after Christmas, we were wondering if it would be fine if we stayed at your place for the entire break or at least through Christmas."

Harry said, "That's not a problem. When is your mum coming?"

Kayla responded, "She was thinking about Christmas Eve. She has a few things to take care of at work and with her friends back home so that's why she'll be arriving Christmas Eve."

Harry nodded and the group spent the night either playing some wizards chess, exploding snaps, just talking, or meeting up with other friends because they knew that tomorrow was going to be hectic and the possibility of forgetting to wish somebody a happy and safe break.

The next day everybody was dragging their trunks down to the entrance of the castle so the house elves can take the trunks down to the train. The group was part of a mad dash to the station with everybody excited about going home for the holidays. The train ride home was uneventful as Harry and his friends pretty much stayed in their train compartment the entire time. When the Hogwarts Express reached Kings Cross, the platform was full of people waiting to meet up with their friend or family member from Hogwarts. Harry also noticed a large group of red heads that were accompanied by Order members and he knew that Dumbledore was going to try to keep Harry at Grimmauld Place.

The group made it off the train and was immediately assaulted by hugs from Mrs. Weasley and greetings of either handshakes or hugs from the rest of the people waiting on the platform. Nightlight chose that moment to show up and sat on Harry's shoulder once the last hug was greeting was completed. As they were about to leave Harry said, "I guess I'll leave from here. I'll see you all in a few days."

Mrs. Weasley grabbed Harry's hand and said, "No Harry. You're going to stay with us until we head over to your place so we know that you'll be safe."

Harry shook his head and pulled his hand away while saying, "I'm sorry Mrs. Weasley but I have a few things to do and I'm very much capable to taking care of myself."

Kingsley said, "Harry, we have heard all of the stories that you've gone through and survived. But there is a bigger issue here and it's our job to be here to protect you."

Harry knew the answer already but asked anyway, “Who was it that told you I need protecting and sent you here?”

Kingsley said, “Dumbledore sent us. He didn’t want a repeat of what happened over the summer about not knowing where you were. So this time, we’re to stay with you at all times and you are not to leave HQ.”

Harry looked around and saw Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Mr. and Mrs. Granger, Mrs. Longbottom, Mr. Lovegood, Kingsley, Remus, Tonks, Mad-Eye, and he could smell the firewhiskey from Mundungus but he was hidden. That lead Harry to think how many other people are hidden that he did not know about. The odds were against him so he said, “There’s not much you can do if I choose not to go with you.”

Kingsley pulled out his wand but Harry pulled his out quicker with a flick of his wrist and a rose wand was in his right hand. He pointed the wand at Kingsley and said, “Moody’s probably disappointed in you right now, out drawn by a kid. What ever happened to Constant Vigilance?” Harry looked over to Moody who was nodding his agreement with what he just said.

Harry walked over to Ginny and whispered to her, “I’ve got to go before this gets really nasty. I’ll see you in a few days.” Ginny nodded and he gave her a kiss on the cheeks. Harry took a few steps away from everybody and said, “I guess I’ll see you all sometimes soon considering you are all probably going to run back to my house to tell Dumbledore what is about to happen here.”

Nightlight jumped up and was hovering just above Harry within arms length. Harry continued on to say, “I’ll see you all in a few days and let Dumbledore know that we have issues again and I mean issues.” With that, Harry reached up and grabbed onto Nightlight’s tail feathers. In a burst of blue and white flames Harry was gone.

After Harry left, Remus started to laugh uncontrollable. Mrs. Weasley turned to him and said, “This is not good Remus. He was supposed to come with us and look what happened.”

Remus managed to calm down a bit and said, "What he just did is exactly something James or Sirius would do. There's nothing to worry about, Harry can take care of himself." The kids nodded their agreement but the adults didn't.

Kingsley said, "Did Harry tell you something that the rest of us don't know?"

Remus thought about it for a second then said, "He didn't tell me anything that I can think of that he didn't tell anybody here."

Mrs. Weasley and a few others knew something was up but also knew that Remus wasn't going to talk either. She ended up saying, "Come on kids, let's get back to headquarters where it is safer and so we can let the headmaster know what happened."

Ginny was thinking, 'It is happening just like Harry said it would. I want to be there when they tell Dumbledore.'

The group had three ministry cars waiting for them to take them back to Grimmauld Place. The ride home was amusing to the kids as they heard the adults' debate between Harry's disrespectfulness to them and Dumbledore and where he really went. Remus was just as amused as the rest but didn't say anything. He just sat back and let the other adults' debate with Tonks giving him knowing looks.

Once the group arrived back to Grimmauld Place, Mrs. Weasley pushed the kids to go upstairs to unpack while she went to go find Dumbledore. The kids rushed up to their rooms and left their trunks there to get back in time for what they were hoping was for some action. They got back down just in time to hear Mrs. Weasley say, "...was gone. We're not sure where he went."

They heard Dumbledore say, "I'll be over in a minute and can you get everybody together including the kids?"

Mrs. Weasley replied, "Of course, Albus."

Mrs. Weasley went off to gather everybody for a meeting that they already knew would happen once Harry disappeared with Nightlight.

The adults trickled in along with a few other people that weren't on the platform like Snape, McGonagall, and other people who were part of Harry's advance guards that rescued him from the Dursleys during the summer before his fifth year.

The kids were gathered on one side of the room and as far away from Snape as possible. They were flanked by members of the Weasley family. Remus was sitting in the corner farthest from Snape and tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Dumbledore came into the room by the assistance of Fawkes. He waved his wand around and the kitchen table was pulled towards the fireplace with a few chairs behind it and conjured a few extra chairs for guests to be seated at. Dumbledore sat at the middle of the table and was joined by McGonagall to his left and Kingsley to his right.

After taking a seat and calling the meeting to order, Dumbledore said, "Kingsley, please tell everybody here what happened at Kings Cross for the benefit of those that were not there to see it."

Kingsley went through with the story just as it happened without any editorializing. At the end of the story, while everybody was contemplating what happened, Snape arrogantly said, "I told you that boy was a menace. He has no respect for authority. Just like his father."

Ron, Charlie, Bill, Fred, and George were just about ready to hex the potions master but were restrained by Hermione, her parents, and Mr. and Mrs. Weasley. Nobody thought to restrain Ginny as she held back just long enough so that the boys were distracting her parents when she stood up and said, "What would you know about it Professor? You're never there and all you ever do is criticize people. Some would think that you need to grow up." Ginny knew about what Harry saw in the pensive due to one of their many sessions talking through their mirrors.

A few of the people in the room looked upon Ginny with approval while her mother turned to her yelling, "Ginerva Molly Weasley, you are to apologize for your behavior."

Ginny said, "I didn't do anything wrong. I just merely stated a fact. What has Harry done to Professor Snape to provoke him to always insult Harry? Even I know how much belittling Harry gets from him," Ginny was pointing at Snape, "He's just lucky that Harry doesn't teach him a lesson. I can say this though; there was one good thing about Harry going to the Dursleys every year. He learned to live with being abused and insulted all his life that it is either just going in one ear or out the other which I hope is happening or it's all building up inside and one day you all will pay the price for putting him in this situation." She was pretty much yelling at the end.

Snape sneered, "What would you know about it Ms. Weasley? You're obviously biased in favor of Potter. You would do anything for him and who knows what you do behind closed doors."

Ginny pulled out her wand so quick that nobody saw it happen. She said in a calm cold voice, "Don't ever insult me like that again. Harry may be willing to ignore your rants but I promise you that I will not."

Snape also pulled out his wand and asked, "Is that a threat Weasley?" While he was pulling out his wand, the rest of the Weasley clan had also pulled out their wands and had them pointed at Snape.

Dumbledore said in a commanding voice, "That's enough. Everybody put your wands away. Severus, you are wrong to insult Mr. Potter and Ms. Weasley. Ms. Weasley, you are not to take that tone with a professor. Now everybody calm down and take a seat."

Everybody slowly lowered their wands and took their seats while glaring at each other. Remus was having a fun time watching it unfold thinking that he wanted to be the first to tell Harry what was happening here.

After all the commotion was gone and order was restored, Dumbledore asked, "Does anybody know where Harry went?"

Nobody said anything but Remus had an idea. Even if he wanted to tell everybody where Harry was at but he couldn't because of all the protection charms on Potter Mansion would make it useless. Dumbledore had a feeling that Remus had some information but had

no way of convincing the werewolf to talk. He was hoping that Harry told one of the students where he was staying. He turned to the kids and said, "Did Harry tell any of you where he went?"

Ron, Hermione, Kayla, and Neville shook their heads while Luna was staring off into space which seemed like she wasn't paying attention and Ginny was defiant and didn't respond while maintaining an expressionless face. Dumbledore sighed then said, "Alright, I ask that everybody please keep an eye and an ear out for anything about Harry." He turned to Ginny and said, "Will you please excuse us Ms. Weasley."

Ginny asked, "Why do I have to leave? What are you trying to hide?"

Dumbledore said, "I need to speak to the Order about a few other matters and your friends already offered their assistance already and they should be able to handle it. If we need you Ms. Weasley then I will ask you."

Ginny didn't like that answer at all but in a huff got up and made to leave when Dobby popped in the middle of the kitchen. Dobby was searching the room for something or someone and when he found his target he headed over to it. Dumbledore asked Dobby, "Dobby, how are you today?"

Dobby stopped and replied, "Dobby is fine Headmaster but Dobby has urgent business Dobby must do and can not talk now."

Dumbledore asked, "Dobby, do you know where Harry is and can you tell us?"

Dobby replied, "Dobby will not tell Harry Potter's secrets."

"Dobby, you must tell us where Harry is so we can make sure that he is safe."

Dobby was getting restless with not being able to carry out his duty and said, "No more talk. Dobby must do what Harry Potter says and will not tell Harry Potter's secrets." Dobby walked over to Snape and

said, "Mr. Harry Potter says for Mr. Snape to leave his house immediately."

Snape looked down at the house elf and arrogantly said, "What are you going to do? Tell Potter if he wants me to leave than for him to come and make me."

Dobby replied, "You will not insult Harry Potter. Harry Potter has given Dobby permission to dispose of Mr. Snape if he does not leave. Now leave!"

Snape pulled out his wand and started to say an incantation when Dobby raised his hand and Snape slammed into the wall behind him and leaving the potion's master barely conscious. Dobby walked over and grabbed Snape by his wand hand and started to drag him out of the house. Ron, Fred, and George were laughing while many others were trying to hide their grins. Hermione and Neville were shocked at what they were seeing. Dumbledore said, "Dobby please leave Professor Snape alone. He will leave in just a moment."

Dobby while still dragging Snape said, "Mr. Snape must leave immediately. Harry Potter no want Snape any longer than necessary." Everybody followed the elf out into the foyer to watch in disbelief at what Dobby was doing. Dobby opened the front door and levitated Snape. Snape was floating in the air in front of Dobby like he was a ghost and then in a thrust by the elf, Snape flew out into the street to fall on his back as Dobby closed the front door. Dobby disappeared and a few people cheered like the Weasley men.

The rest of the meeting was uneventful with Ginny being excluded. While all of this was going on, Harry was decorating his house and doing some last minute shopping in Diagon Alley and muggle London. While decorating Dobby showed up and told Harry what was going on and Harry sent Dobby to dispose of Snape while smiling at all the mental images of all the possible ways of getting rid of Snape.

The day arrived for Harry to escort his guests to Potter Mansion. The time of departure was set for the night time under the excuse of trying to not draw attention but Harry had a surprise set up. The surprise was mainly for Ginny but decided that there was no other way for him

to pull it off especially over the break without everybody else being able to participate. Everybody invited to come was waiting anxiously as the clock hit eight o'clock.

Blaze showed up first in the middle of the kitchen which startled everybody. Sunrise showed up next immediately followed by Sunset. Nightlight showed up next with Harry hanging on. Once Harry managed to get his footing, he was bombarded by hugs from Mrs. Weasley and Ginny who also gave him a kiss. After the kiss from Ginny, the two of them were beaming at each other while Ginny leaned against him. Harry said, "Good evening everybody. How's everybody today?"

Everybody gave their greetings but what Harry didn't expect was there were a few extra people there like Kingsley and Snape. Once he saw Snape, he knew that Dumbledore wanted him to let Snape accompany him but didn't want to mention anything and listen to what ever crazy idea that Dumbledore would actually think that Harry would let Snape tag along. Harry asked, "Alright, if everybody is ready, let's get ready to go. The Grangers joined with Tonks and Remus will be getting there with Blaze. The Weasleys will be getting there with help from Sunrise. Sunset will take the Longbottoms, Lovegoods, Kayla, and Professor Dumbledore. Ginny will be joining me with Nightlight. Are there any questions?"

Almost everybody nodded except for Dumbledore, Snape who was sneering, and Kingsley. Dumbledore said, "Harry, I would like for Severus and Kingsley to accompany us on our stay if that is possible."

Harry thought about it for a moment then said, "Kingsley is more than welcome to join us but Snape will not be joining us. As a matter of fact, I don't think he is even supposed to be in Grimmauld Place."

Dobby showed up and said, "Harry Potter sir, Dobby is sorry for not taking care of Mr. Snape. Dobby will take care of him right now. Dobby wanted to wait for Harry Potter sir because the Headmaster said that he wanted Harry Potter sir and Mr. Snape for something so Dobby thought it was fine. Dobby is sorry. Dobby bad house elf."

Dobby was about to hit himself on the counter when Harry said, "Stop Dobby. Remember, what we talked about. No punishing yourself. It's alright. I want to hear what Professor Dumbledore can say to convince me to let Snape come."

Dobby nodded and said, "Dobby will wait for Harry Potter sir to arrive." He then disappeared back to Potter Mansion.

Dumbledore said, "Harry, you must treat Professor Snape with respect." He was emphasizing the word professor.

Harry said, "I don't have to do anything with Snape. I am on break away from school and this is my house so if anything, Snape is trespassing."

Dumbledore was about to say something when Snape said, "Do you think I really want to go to your little hide out Potter? I am only here because the Headmaster thought you needed my help."

Harry replied, "Then it is settled. You don't want to be anywhere near me and I don't want to be near you either. So we will just stay out of each other's way and interact only when absolutely necessary like in class. Remember to don't let the door hit your boney ass when you leave."

Most of the people were trying to hide their grins and hold in their laughter at what Harry just said but that only managed to make Snape angrier. Snape said, "You will not disrespect me like that. If I have to, I will teach you a lesson myself. The same lesson that I should have taught your father."

Snape pulled out his wand but he was too slow as Harry already had his wand drawn and pointing at him. Dobby showed up in a pop again between Harry and Snape while facing Snape. Harry said, "You will not speak of my father from that filthy trap that you call a mouth. I suggest you leave or Dobby here will be showing me a repeat of what he was telling me he did to you a few days ago." Harry paused a moment, then said, "As a matter of fact, I hope you try to stay because I would like to see your greasy ass get taught another lesson. It seems that Slytherins don't seem to learn their lessons the

first time around but that could be due to the lack of a brain in their heads.”

Snape was about to say something when Dumbledore said, “That’s enough. It looks like there will be no way for you to join us. Severus please return to the castle.”

Snape was about to say something but the look on Dumbledore’s face told him otherwise. When Snape was turning to leave, Harry winked at him which provoked Snape to lose control and charge at Harry. Dobby reacted right away and blasted Snape into the wall and then pulled the potions master out of the front door. After Snape was gone, Dobby disappeared.

Harry turned around and saw a few people hanging on to each other to try not to fall down from holding in their laughter. He said, “That was pretty fun. I must remember to do that more often.”

Dumbledore said, “Harry that was not necessary. I also know that you provoked him at the end there. I saw you winking at him because of your reflection off the mirror by the door.”

Harry replied, “I’m not going to deny that I winked at him. It was his fault for not being able to restrain himself. After all, if this was to happen at school, we all know that he would get away with it and now he’s on my territory and will bring him just as much hell as he does when I’m in his presence at school.”

Dumbledore sighed then said, “Harry, I wish that you would put the past behind you.”

Harry said, “I never pushed first, I also didn’t give the second blow, but if he thinks that he will be able to get away with it anymore then he is sorely mistaken. I’ve tried putting it behind me but it is Snape that always pushes and I’m tired to ignoring. It’s time for me to defend myself because you obviously have looked the other way each time or have no control over him.”

Dumbledore was about to say something when Ginny came up to Harry, took his hand in hers, and said, “This debate will always go in

a circle and I'm glad that Harry is standing up for himself. Let's just go and try to have an enjoyable Christmas."

Harry nodded and said, "Alright, there are just a few more things that I need to say before we leave. First of all, everybody will be arriving just outside of the wards and you all will not know exactly where we are going. Once we get there, I will place a charm on each person that will allow re-entry just in case anybody has to leave. And finally, since we are arriving outside of the wards, please be on alert and have your wands close by."

Harry waved his wand into the air and a shower of silver sparks rained from the ceiling as one by one people started to glow. After it was done, Ginny asked, "Harry what did you just finish doing and why were we glowing?"

Harry said, "I casted a charm to disable all tracking charms. The longer you take to glow then the more tracking charms there are on you. Now let's go and remember 'Constant Vigilance.'"

Dumbledore deflated just a little slightly which Harry was the only one to notice and made a mental note. Shortly afterwards, everybody disappeared from Grimmauld Place. They all appeared almost at the same time in the middle of a forest clearing. There was enough light outside to see where everybody was at and who was who but it was still dark outside.

Harry pulled out his wand and slowly looked around using the infrared abilities of his glasses to see if there was anybody around. Once everybody saw what Harry was doing, the kids were pushed to the center while the adults were forming a perimeter around the kids and the Grangers. They were also trying to see if there was any danger.

Harry saw nothing, lowered his wand, and said, "It looks clear." At that, everybody else lowered their wands but kept it out in their hands just in case. Harry said, "Everybody please get closer together so I can administer the charm to enter."

The group bunched up tighter as Harry raised his wand muttering a charm that nobody could hear. There were gold sparkles in the air

and rained down from the sky. Harry said, "It's done." He turned to Remus and said, "Professor Lupin, do you want to do the honors of telling everybody where we are at?"

Remus was smiling, nodded, and then said, "It would be my pleasure Harry. Everybody, I want to welcome you to Potter Mansion."

Ginny asked, "Is this true? Harry, how did you find this place?"

Harry took Ginny's hand and said, "Yup, I found it when I visited my family vault. Apparently, it was kept a secret from me."

After what he said, Harry was getting a few curious looks while Dumbledore was trying to look surprised. Harry continued on saying, "Will everybody please follow me."

The group walked on a dirt trail into the forest. After about five minutes of walking with the added comfort of the three phoenixes and the white tiger nearby they came upon another clearing. This time, there was a large mansion a few ways back but what made it look even more captivating was there were multi-colored twinkling lights dispersed throughout the front lawn or more appropriately field. There were lights above them and along the ground that made it look like you were walking amongst the stars and constellations. Some lights were spinning together while others were twinkling and many that were free standing or shooting across the field.

The group was in awe and silently enjoyed the scene around them. The couples were holding each others hand while the rest were wishing they had somebody to share it with. Harry squeezed Ginny's hand and whispered, "I originally intended this just for you but there was no way for me to do this without everybody finding out. I hope you don't mind."

Ginny reached up to give Harry a kiss then said, "I love it Harry. Thank you so much for all of this."

Once they made it to the front doors, the doors were opened automatically with four house elves standing in wait for Harry's arrival. Harry said, "I would like to welcome everybody to Potter Mansion.

Please make yourselves at home. There are a few rules though but I'll tell you all in a minute. First I would like for you all to meet, Ray and Rain." Harry gestured to the two house elves dressed in red and blue respectively. He continued to say, "I believe that most of you have already met Dobby and the house elf on the end is Winky if you don't know her already." The house elves bowed and Harry said, "If you need anything please let me know or one of the house elves. Now, if you will all follow me into the library."

Hermione's eyes lit up along with her parents' eyes when the word library was mentioned. The group followed Harry into the library and took seats around the desk. Harry went around the desk and said, "Would anybody like something to drink? We'll have dinner shortly."

A few people nodded and Rain popped in with a tray full of butterbeers while Ray popped in with a tray with some appetizers. While everybody were biting on some snacks and drinking, Harry said, "Please feel free to explore the house and the field behind the house. You all might find the back a bit interesting, too bad Hagrid is not here to see it. Well, I want everybody to feel comfortable so please feel free to ask. Now onto the rules that I was talking about, the first is Hermione is not allowed into any of the libraries in this house."

Hermione gasped as a few people laughed at her reaction. Harry said, "Sorry, Hermione. I saw your eyes once you came in here and don't worry. You can spend as much time you like in here as much as you want. Well, there are two libraries here but you won't be able to get to the other library though. The other library is located on the third floor which is off limits to everybody. I was told by the Ray and Rain when I first arrived that by tradition, nobody is allowed onto the third floor because it is warded for Potters only. There is also the holding cell in the basement and the training room on this floor that is off limits to everybody. It is for safety and security reasons but other then that this house is available to everyone. The house elves will show you all to your rooms where you all can unpack and dinner will be ready in half an hour. Please feel free to explore."

The house elves showed up and escorted everybody to their rooms. Mr. and Mrs. Granger, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Mr. Lovegood, and Mrs. Longbottom shared a suite. All of the boys shared a suite and the

girls shared a suite opposite of the guys. Remus, Tonks, Kingsley, and Dumbledore shared a suite across from the other adults. Everybody had their own bedrooms with the exception of Fred and George who shared a room and the married couples. Everybody was surprised at the amenities in their bedrooms from the large soft bed to the luxurious bathrooms.

Dinner in itself was a joyous affair with much laughter and talking. Harry decided to suppress his growing animosity towards Dumbledore for the holidays while Dumbledore was trying to calculate a plan to get Harry to listen to him while playing his game of acting in front of everybody.

Chapter 22

Christmas

The next few days were enjoyable to everybody and even Mrs. Weasley managed to convince the house elves to allow her to help cook. Ginny and Harry spent a lot of time together alone talking or walking around Potter Mansion in the evenings or at night. Hermione and Ron were the same way and Tonks and Remus. During the day, they played quidditch, met the animals out back in the barn, and exploring the house. The adults would leave during the daytime and go to work and return by assistance of one of the phoenixes or Blaze after work. They picked up and dropped off everybody from Grimmauld Place.

During these few days, the rift in the relationship between Dumbledore and Harry was noticeable to everybody but didn't say anything. Dumbledore only spent a few hours a day at Potter Mansion and even tried to sneak in a tracking device into the estate once again but the wards negated it upon arrival. Harry had to negate the tracking device the first time because they were landing just outside of the wards therefore the tracking device would lead them to the general vicinity of Potter Mansion.

The day came to escort Kayla's mom to Potter Mansion and Dumbledore did not think it wise to permit her within Grimmauld Place and advised against letting her into Potter Mansion but Harry wasn't going to listen. The plan was to pick up Kayla's mom from the Leaky Cauldron by the portkey area. Kayla and Harry were having lunch in the Leaky Cauldron when a tall brunette with brown eyes came through the door.

Kayla noticed her first, jumped up, which startled a few people, and ran to great her mother with a long hug and saying, "It's great to see you mom. Did you have a nice trip?"

With an English accent, her mother responded, "It's good to see you too kid. It was as best can be expected I guess given that it was traveling the muggle way, but the in flight movie was delightful."

Harry made his way over to the ladies and when he arrived Kayla said, "Harry I would like you to meet my mom, Alexandria Rapp. Mom I would like for you to meet a good friend from school, Harry Potter."

Alexandria was frozen for a moment and from what could be told she was thinking about something but Harry just figured it was another person's usual reaction to meeting him but she wasn't searching for his scar. Harry just shrugged it off and he offered his hand and said, "It's a pleasure to meet you Ms. Rapp."

Ms. Rapp shook Harry's hand and said, "It's good to meet you also Mr. Potter. Kayla writes about you and your friends all the time. Please call me Alexia."

Harry replied, "Kayla talks about you all the time also and please call me Harry."

The three of them sat down, Alexia ordered some food, and enjoyed their lunch while getting to know each other. Alexia and Harry hit it off almost immediately and started to exchange stories and correct some of the rumors that Alexia heard about Harry from the states. After lunch, Harry asked, "Are we ready to go?"

Alexia responded, "If you don't mind Harry. I would like to do some shopping in Diagon Alley for a little while."

Harry said, "That's fine." He took Alexia's travel bag and the group made their way into Diagon Alley. Alexia and Kayla were having a blast getting reacquainted and running from shop to shop buying almost anything that they wanted. Harry was just amazed at how these women can keep up this pace at shopping. He did manage to hide his identity from being revealed and after five hours of shopping they made their way to a side alley to get ready to leave.

Harry said, "Alexia, in a little while you're going to show up in what looks like a prison cell or what I call a holding cell. I'll get to you shortly after that and let you out and administer the charm to allow you to come and go freely."

Alexia nodded and Harry called for his three phoenixes. The three of them held onto a tail of a phoenix and after two bursts of red and white flames and a blue and white flame, Harry and Kayla showed up down in the basement of Potter Mansion just outside of the holding cell where Alexia was dropped off at. Harry walked over to her and muttered something while pointing his wand at the lock to the cell door and the door snapped open. Harry muttered another charm and the same gold sparkles before started to rain down on Alexia giving her access to Potter Mansion.

After everything was done, Harry said, "Welcome to Potter Mansion Alexia."

Alexia's eyes opened wide for a moment but quickly recovered. Harry didn't take much notice in what just happened. Harry led Kayla and Alexia out of the basement and into the dining room because it was almost time for dinner. Harry ran into Dobby and Winky first so he introduced them as people started to arrive.

Harry told Dobby and Winky, "Dobby, Winky, I would like you to meet Alexandria Rapp. She's Kayla's mom and Alexia here are two of my friends that help me out more than I can thank them for. This is Dobby and Winky."

Dobby, Winky, and Alexia greeted each other and the first to arrive but not surprisingly were the Weasley men. Harry introduced everybody to each other and the only people missing were Kingsley, Dumbledore, Remus, Ray, and Rain. Everybody gathered around the table getting to know Alexia while Alexia was getting to know everybody when Dobby came back and said, "Harry Potter sir, Mr. Shacklebolt, and Headmaster DumbleyDore said they will not be able to make it to dinner tonight."

Harry said, "That's fine but where are Ray and Rain?"

At the mention of the two house elves, they popped into the room as everybody else staying over the holidays came in. Once the house elves caught sight of Alexia they ran to hug her saying, "The mistress has returned. Ray and Rain miss the mistress very much."

That got some awkward looks from everybody and a suspicious one from Harry. Alexia said, "It's good to see you two also." She turned to Harry and said, "There's something that I must tell you Harry but can it wait until after Christmas. I am hopeful that you will like the news."

Harry asked, "Why can't you tell me now? We can go into another room if you like."

Remus interrupted by saying, "Harry, trust me on this one. Wait until after Christmas for this one." He turned to Alexia and said, "Can I talk to you for a moment?"

She nodded and the two of them left. Harry said out loud to nobody in particular, "Something isn't right. I don't like this one bit. I thought everybody knew by now that I don't like secrets that concern me being with held. Somehow I have a feeling that all hell is going to break out soon and it's going to happen after Christmas."

Most of the people in the room agreed with him while others had an idea of what happened. Ginny came over to Harry and said, "Harry, I don't like what is happening either but I know that we can trust Professor Lupin. Let's just wait until after Christmas to figure this out like he said. I'll be there to help bring hell if they bring you more bad news. You've already gone through enough and you're not even twenty."

Harry turned to Kayla to say, "Kayla, do you know what is going on?"

Kayla responded, "I'm sorry Harry but I promised not to say anything. I am hopeful that you will agree with mom also that you will see it as a good thing for more reasons than one." She had a hopeful look when she asked, "Harry, please trust me and just wait until after Christmas."

Harry sighed and nodded. He said, "I'll try to live with it and it is only a few days away but I don't want any more surprises."

Everybody agreed and the house elves were bringing out the food as Remus and Alexia came back but Alexia looked like she was crying just moments before but wiped away her tears. Harry was about to

comment on it but Ginny whispered to him, "Don't say anything about it Harry," like she was reading his mind.

Harry decided to let it go and everybody took their seats and ate dinner. It was quiet at first but after Ron spat some food out his mouth asking for somebody to pass him some mashed potatoes, Hermione retaliated with comments about table manners and the two of them started to bicker which broke the ice. Ginny noticed Harry's discomfort and proceeded to talk to Alexia and the combination of the two events broke the ice and stories were exchanged around the table. Before he knew it, he was so comfortable with the people around the dinner table that he felt like everybody at the table was his family.

After dinner Rain and Ray assisted Alexia to her room which was in the same suite as the girls so she could spend more time with her went with her mom while the rest of the kids went into the library to play various games while the adults either joining the kids in some of the games or talking amongst themselves in the main common room. That night everything felt just right like they were one large happy family.

The next morning, Harry decided to get a practice session in the next morning before everybody woke up. What Harry didn't know was that word spread from his conversation from the night before between him and Ginny. The two of them were talking about what they were going to do today and Harry said he wanted to practice his dueling skills in the morning in his training room. Ginny wanted to come and watch. Harry was hesitant at first to let her watch but decided to let her watch which resulted in a few other people wanting to come see. In the end, everybody found out and everybody wanted to watch the extent of Harry's dueling skills and to an extent this included Kayla also because she knew that Harry was still holding back some of his abilities during their practice session.

Harry got dressed in some all white battle robes similar to the ones that he wore during his fight in York while defending the orphanage. Kayla was there the night before and asked if she could watch also so Harry decided that anybody could come watch if they wanted and informed the house elves about it because at least one house elf was

present during Harry's training just in case something happened. Harry entered the room and started his stretching exercises.

Ginny and everybody else came down about fifteen minutes after Harry went to practice. When they entered the training room, they were met by Dobby who ushered everybody into the observation area which allowed them to watch everything that happened in the room through a two way mirror.

Dobby said, "Harry Potter said that for anybody who wanted to watch him practice today to stay in this room. Harry Potter will not know who is in this room to not distract Harry Potter. Dobby and Winky is here to make sure that Harry Potter is safe. If anything happens then please do not leave this room."

Ginny asked, "Dobby, what do you mean if anything happens? How dangerous is it in there when Harry practices?"

Dobby replied, "It is very dangerous for Harry Potter. Dobby remembers one time; Harry was injured badly and couldn't move for three days."

Ginny ran to the mirror and started yelling, "Harry James Potter, you are not to proceed with these practices if you're just using it to hurt yourself!"

Hermione pulled Ginny back to her seat and said, "Ginny, he can't hear you remember? He doesn't know that we're in here right now watching him."

Ginny said, "Well, Harry hasn't started his duel yet so we can stop him before he starts."

Winky popped into the room by the door and said, "Winky is sorry but nobody is allowed in there with Harry Potter. It is too dangerous to be in the room for practice can start at any time."

Ginny sighed but nervous at what might happen. Kayla, Hermione, Mrs. Weasley, and Alexia shared in her nervousness but not to the same degree as Ginny. Winky stayed by the door watching Harry and

Dobby stood in the opposite side of the room watching Harry. When everybody noticed that the house elves were paying attention to Harry, they turned their attention to him also.

Ginny's eyes were glued on Harry trying to anticipate what is going to happen and hopefully he will be safe so she can give him a piece of her mind about practicing so dangerously. She saw that Harry had both wands in his left and right hands. Harry stood in the middle of the room with his head down as if he was trying to sense what was going on around him then all of a sudden a cloaked figured dressed in black robes and wearing a white mask showed up behind him and shot a stunning spell at him.

Everybody in the room jumped up and anybody with a wand pulled it out getting ready to fight but Dobby informed them that it was just imaginary and that was not a real Deatheater. Harry rolled to his right then spun around and hit the Deatheater with a bludgeoning spell which hit its mark and the Deatheater flew back against the wall and slumped over. The observers heard everything going on in the room.

Three more Deatheaters showed up and shot three bludgeoning spells at Harry and he threw up a shield which absorbed the attack as Harry used his second wand to fire off a few stunning spells between the shields that he was creating with the first wand. The spells hit their marks but one Deatheater would revive another stunned Deatheater or both. After about five more minutes another Deatheater showed up and it was four against one. To make matters a bit more difficult, the scene in the room changed to that of a restaurant.

Harry changed to a strategy of just blowing all the Deatheaters to dust by firing only explosion hexes but favored the Reducto Spell which annihilated anything that it hit. The only spells that Harry alternated were the various shielding spells that were more affective with certain attacking spells. Harry's shields ranged from blue, green, black, and yellow but all were transparent. The Deatheaters were also using explosion hexes but also used bludgeoning spells and stunning spells. They didn't have to use many shielding spells because Harry spent more time shielding from the four Deatheaters than attacking.

Another five minutes past and Harry managed to hit three of the Deatheaters with a sudden burst of a series of Reducto spells in quick succession that caught the Deatheaters off guard. As soon as those three Deatheaters went down and disappeared, four more showed up surrounding him which now made the odds five to one which caught Harry off guard and was hit by a bludgeoning spell to the back which threw him forward into another Deatheater. Harry knocked over the Deatheater and stunned him quickly, then used the Deatheater's body as a shield. The Deatheater's body that Harry was using quickly was obliterated with all the explosion hexes that hit it. Harry dropped the body and resumed the plan of shielding and sporadic attacking that he used earlier since now the four Deatheaters left were all in front of him now.

This went on for another ten minutes when three more Deatheaters showed up and the odds were now seven to one. To make matters worse, there was now an innocent little girl that Harry had to protect. Harry grabbed the little girl and pulled her behind him and fired off some more explosion hexes in a row at one Deatheater until it broke through his shield and the Deatheater went down with a large gaping hole in his chest. Harry then started the strategy with the next Deatheater. This didn't last very long as a few more Deatheaters showed up which made the odds ten to one.

Harry summoned a series of shields but didn't take long for the spells to break his shields and started to take a beating from all of the spells. He was on his knees trying to recover from all of the spells when one of the Deatheaters yelled out, "Crucio!" as the spell hit Harry. Harry fell to the ground in pain with the feeling of hundreds of hot knives slamming into him. Once the curse was lifted, Harry heard the words "Avada Kedavera!" which shot right at the girl that Harry was supposed to be protecting.

The girl fell over lifeless as Harry watched her fall. The memories of Sirius falling through the veil rushed through his mind along with the thought of the image of the boy from Ravenclaw that lost his baby sister during the fight at York. Harry's emotion and magic raced throughout him and it seemed like there was no pain and infinite strength shooting from him. Harry stood up and screamed with what

seemed like a breeze going around him making his clothes float around him.

Harry's eyes became a bright green filled with anger and started firing explosion spells so quickly that the Deatheaters had no time react and the spectators' eyes barely registered ten spells being shot. All they saw were bright red flashes and at the end of the last flash, there were disembodied Deatheaters lying all around in the room and a Harry barely standing in the middle of the room.

The room changed to all black and all of the Deatheaters disappeared. A mist started to fill from around the ground up to about half way up to his knee. Suddenly three images started to form which were his dad, mum, and godfather. The three parents were dressed in black robes and didn't look very pleased.

Lily said, "I can't believe that I died for such an ungrateful child. Petunia was right when she said that you're no better than trash."

Harry was mentally and physically exhausted, he was panting while saying, "I'm sorry. I'm really sorry."

James said, "Sorry does us no good you piece of crap. If you really want to make us proud of you than you know what you have to do."

Sirius said more sympathetically, "Harry, your parents are just a bit upset and you can't really blame them. They've waited over fifteen years for you to join them. Everybody around you is only using you Harry. Come and join us and be happy with your family again."

Harry said, "I don't know if I can take this anymore. But what about the prophecy, if today was an indicator, I'll be joining you all very soon."

On the wall opposite of where the spectators were, the words of the prophecy spelled out with fire were written out in its entirety. Harry fell to his knees, not having much strength left in him to fight anymore.

Sirius said, "I agree that you won't make it through that fight so why deny the inevitable. You might as well save yourself the pain and just join us now."

Harry said, "I don't want to leave my friends. I can't let them fight this by themselves."

Lily said in a soft tone, "Harry, your dad and I are sorry for yelling at you earlier. Come and join us. We're waiting and all the pain will go away. Just come to us."

Memories of Harry's past were being shown on the two side walls. The right wall was showing memories of Harry being beaten and yelled at by the Dursleys while the left wall showed memories of all the pain and ridicule that he went through ever since he started Hogwarts. In summary, the right wall showed how much the Dursleys hated him while the left wall showed how distrustful and the lack of loyalty the wizarding world has for Harry. They showed him being used as a tool and not treated like a person.

There were images of Harry being beaten with a stick while he was a five year old kid after he dropped some plates after doing the dishes. That was followed with images of a younger Harry being punished by Aunt Petunia by placing his hands on a hot stove for burning the food. Tears formed in Harry's eyes as he saw images of every single beating and torture he had to go through by the hands of the Dursleys.

On the opposite wall there were images of Harry at Hogwarts. There was a memory of Harry being tortured by Voldemort after Cedric was murdered. The image of Harry being bitten by the basilisk accompanied by all the whispers that were going around him from his peers talking about how Harry was evil and was a freak. It all ended with the repeated images of Sirius falling through the veil over and over again and Harry's temporary break down that followed just before he chased after Bellatrix.

Harry responded, "But mum, I..."

He didn't get a chance to finish what he said as his dad said, "Don't worry Harry, we're your parents and know what's best for you. Just stay there and we'll take care of the rest."

The three guardians stood back and raised their wands at Harry. Harry didn't have it in him anymore and didn't bother to fight back. Instead, he just stayed kneeling on the ground waiting for the blow to come. When the spell was about to be said three more forms showed up in the room dressed in white. It was another copy of Lily, James, and Sirius.

The three of them raised their wands and together shot stunning spells at their respective copies which hit their marks because the three dressed in black was not prepared for it.

The three guardians dressed in white approached Harry and Lily pulled him into a hug and said, "Harry, don't ever give up. We love you and know that you deserve a better life but you must fight to make it better. It's not fair but we know that you can survive and make it better for everybody."

Harry said, "I'm not sure if I have it in me to do it anymore."

James came up and said, "Don't listen to what our copies said before Harry. We couldn't be more proud of you for all you have done and what we know you will do later on in life."

Sirius said, "Yeah kid. Don't get us wrong. We do want to be with you but we want you to live a long and happy life before you join us."

Harry said, "I don't know anymore."

Lily covered Harry's heart with her hand and said, "We'll always be in your heart. Whenever you have any doubts about what path you should take in life than follow your heart. We're here with you always."

Harry said, "It's just so much easier to give up now. I'm sorry if I disappoint you but I guess there is only so much I can take."

Sirius said, "There's nothing that you can do that will make us disappointed in you Harry. You've had to go through so much and much more then anybody should have to. We know that the moment that you join us just after you've given everything you've got to stay alive and fight for what you believe in."

James said, "That's right Harry. If I'm not mistaken, behind that door there is a red headed witch that is about to blow down that door to get in here."

Harry asked, "How is it that you all are here. This never happened before."

Lily said, "This room generated the hostile version of us to give you another form of training which was for you to develop yourself mentally. That's why that little girl was added also. But we came because your heart called for us to come and help you. We will always be here for you. We might not be there physically and were able to stun the over versions of us because this room permitted it but we will always be in your heart and soul."

James said, "It is time for us to go. Remember that we love you and are always with you."

Sirius said, "Bye kid. We're proud of you and always follow your heart."

Lily said, "We must go but never lose hope."

Harry hugged each one of them as they started to become misty and then disappeared. He had tears running down his cheeks. Harry raised his hand and muttered the stop command and the room return to its blank state with cushions on the floor with weapons on the walls like when he had just arrived in the room earlier.

Once the room reset it self, the doors slammed open as Ginny came rushing in followed by everybody else. Ginny pulled him into a hug and whispered, "We'll always be here for you Harry. We saw everything. I will always be here for you."

Harry said, "Thank you Gin."

He was bombarded by hugs from all the ladies and either one handed hugs from the men or pats on the back. Dobby popped into the room followed by Winky and said, "Dobby needs to get Harry Potter sir into bed. Harry Potter sir is hurt and need to heal."

Ginny said, "If you take him to his room then none of us can be with him Dobby. Will you take him to the infirmary down in the basement so we can keep an eye on him please?"

Winky nodded and took Harry away in a pop. Harry spent the rest of the day on the bed down in his infirmary with a steady rotation of visitors with him but Ginny stayed with him the entire time. When they were alone, Ginny also gave him a piece of her mind about worrying her again and that he was not allowed to do that kind of training again especially when it involved the Unforgivable Curses and the mental beating that he took from the dark versions of his parents and Sirius.

Harry recovered to about 90 by the time night came around and after spending the night down there due to all the pressure he was getting from everybody, he was all better by the next morning. They spent the next day taking it easy just hanging around the house and before they knew it, Christmas arrived.

Christmas day started off in a state of anarchy at Potter Mansion as all of the kids were rushing around trying to get through breakfast as quickly as possible so they can get to their presents. The presents were sitting under a large Christmas tree in the main common room. The exchanging of gifts took a few hours as everybody took turns opening gifts on rotation from the youngest which was Ginny to the oldest which was Dumbledore.

The Grangers gave everybody a large assortment of sugarless candy, toothpaste along with brushes, some floss, and books courtesy of Hermione. The Rapps gave everybody wizarding toys from America. The house elves made everybody some clothing that didn't match.

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley gave everybody some jumpers with their first initials on it. Ron gave everybody some wizarding candies like

chocolate frogs. The twins gave everybody an assortment of pranking items. Bill gave everybody souvenirs of protection charms from Egypt while Charlie gave books and little dragon figurines that were charmed to fly around the room.

The Longbottoms gave everybody magical healing plants and books on healing. The Lovegoods gave everybody a lifetime subscription to the Quibbler and special quills that make the writer only write the truth. Tonks gave everybody comedic clothing with funny sayings on them. Remus gave everybody a pocketknife that Harry had before that could open up any lock. Dumbledore's gift was tiny pensives that were only large enough to hold five memories but were small enough to be carried around in a pocket.

Harry gave the Grangers a large collection of books on the magical world and for Hermione sets of books to help her on the NEWTS. He gave the Longbottoms some extremely rare plants that came from his greenhouse which were for Neville and Mrs. Longbottom got a set of broaches.

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley received some muggle appliances to play with. The twins received a deed to a small shop in Hogsmeade so they can expand. Bill received a set of protective robes to help protect him while working at his new job as a curse breaker at Gringott's. Charlie received a set of dragon skin clothing to also protect him at work. Ron got a set of the authentic goal keeper uniform for his favorite team the Cannons.

Harry gave the Lovegoods a set of supposed treasure maps and a collection of butterbeer caps turned into jewelry which was for Luna. Tonks received some neon color clothing that would match her hair. Remus got an automatically refillable vial of single doses of the special Wolfsbane potion that Harry was giving to Remus. Dumbledore received a box full of socks.

The house elves got some fabric and sewing material so they can keep up their hobby of sewing which they all started taking up after seeing Dobby do. Harry gave both Kayla and her mom a set of round trip plane tickets to travel between the states and England.

Ginny received an entirely new wardrobe that was similar to Harry's existing collection including casual robes, formal robes, dress robes, and everyday muggle clothing. Later on that night when they were alone, Harry gave Ginny the Gryffindor pin that he got from his family vault that allowed him to get to Ginny anywhere she was at and for Ginny to get to him.

The entire day was filled with laughter and happy memories shown to everybody by use of a large pensieve available in the library that projected an image onto the wall. There was a large feast at lunch and an even larger feast at dinner. They were all in their own little world but little did they know everything was about to change.

Chapter 23

The Truth Revealed

The next day started off as another happy occasion with laughter around the breakfast table except for one person which was Alexia. She knew that she would have to tell Harry who she is and how the house elves knew her. After what happened in the training area, Ginny refused to let Harry out of her sight and forced Harry to move from the privacy of the third floor to a bedroom down in the boys' suite. When breakfast was done, Harry and Ginny went out to the barn to visit with a few of the animals and play with Blaze.

They were interrupted from what they were doing when Alexia showed up in the barn with Kayla. Alexia asked, "Harry, can we talk to you for a minute?"

Ginny knew that what ever had to be said wasn't going to be good from her instincts. She held on tight to Harry's hand as he said, "If you don't mind, I would like Ginny to be here and she'll probably find out about it later anyway unless it is matters of a secretive nature."

Alexia said, "She can stay if you wish but I just hope that you like what you hear but I know for sure that there are parts that you will not."

Harry conjured some benches by the water fountain in the barn for everybody sit down. The bench was made of a white stone with the table separating the two benches, also made of stone. Harry asked, "Would anybody like some tea?"

The ladies nodded, and Rain popped in immediately with a tray with some tea for everybody. They sat there drinking their tea in silence preparing either to tell the story or hear the story. Alexia said, "Let me tell you a story that happened a few years ago. There was a baby boy that was born late July in 1981. When he was born, the excitement around him was uncontrollable. His parents were so happy and all the family friends were celebrating in their happiness. About a month later, a set of godparents were chosen. The godfather was a close friend of the boy's father, and the godmother was a close friend of the boy's mom. In reality, it was like the boy had an endless army of

parents that took care of him and watched him grow for about a little over a year. On Halloween of the next year, the boy's parents were betrayed and killed, leaving the boy an orphan. The orphan's godparents didn't make it to the child in time because somebody had already come to get him. The godfather was sent to Azkaban shortly after that and the godmother was ordered to stay away from the child."

Harry was getting a little angry and some of it could be heard in his voice along with sarcasm when he said, "Let me take a wild guess here that I am the orphan, Sirius was the godfather, and the big surprise is you are my godmother."

Alexia nodded but didn't have it in her to look Harry in his eyes. Kayla also looked ashamed of herself while Ginny placed her hand on Harry's lap and gave it a squeeze to try to calm him down. Harry asked, "Were you a part of all of this Kayla?"

Kayla nodded while saying, "I found out about it a few years ago after the Tri-wizard tournament. I spent the two years afterwards trying to convince my mom to come to visit you, but she said that she couldn't face you. It wasn't until I came to Hogwarts that she had to finally come to face what she was hiding from for so long. Please don't be mad Harry."

Harry's anger was rising again and stopped Kayla from continuing with a wave of his hand. He turned back to Alexia and asked, "Why now? You were free from me so why come back? You apparently didn't want to be associated with me if it took Kayla two years to get you to come here."

Alexia said, "It is a little more complicated than me just leaving but I never wanted to leave you Harry. Ever since the day I left England and went to America, I was ashamed of myself because I abandoned you and don't deserve to be your godmother. I came back because Kayla convinced me to finally come and although I don't deserve to be, I would like to be part of your life again."

Harry knew that his anger was going to blow if the wrong answer was given which was the answer that he expected when he asked, "Does Dumbledore know about this?"

Alexia said, "Dumbledore knew about the events after your parents died. He only saw Kayla as a baby and with some little glamour charms we were able to get our foot in the door. After Kayla was accepted, I think that Dumbledore wanted to send Kayla back when he found out that she was my daughter. He wasn't happy when he came to the States to talk to me."

Harry asked, "Are you telling me this was all planned out by Dumbledore?"

Alexia nodded. She was in thought for a second, then she said, "Maybe I should tell you the story of the night your parents died so you can understand this better."

Harry nodded and she began to tell the story.

Flashback

It was a joyous occasion in the Great Hall. It was during the Halloween feast and the students were eating and talking happily with one another. All of a sudden, the doors to the Great Hall slammed open and an Auror came rushing in and heading for the Head Table. All of the excitement in the Great Hall froze and watched the Auror as he was yelling, "You-Know-Who has been defeated!"

There was silence for a few seconds as everybody let that piece of information settle in then the Great Hall erupted with cheers and clapping. While the students and most of the faculty were jumping up and down celebrating, the Auror went straight for Alexia who at the time was the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. Once he reached her the Auror told her, "You have to get to the Potters as quickly as possible. James and Lily Potter are dead and Harry Potter was the one that defeated You-Know-Who. The baby is still alive."

Alexia froze, as did McGonagall, Flitwick, Sprout, and Dumbledore but he was the first to recover. Hagrid came rushing into the Great

Hall after hearing about the news from a few wizards and witches in Diagon Alley because he was patrolling the area at the time. Dumbledore called for Hagrid and said, "Go to the Potters and get Harry. Try to get to him as fast as possible and meet me at Privet Drive in Surrey."

Hagrid loved baby Harry and rushed out without saying a thing. Alexia walked over to Dumbledore and asked, "What are you going to do with Harry? He should be with Sirius and me. We are his godparents."

Dumbledore said, "Follow me to my office."

The faculty of Hogwarts accompanied the Headmaster to his office. When everybody took their seats, Dumbledore said, "We need to confirm if what has been said is true both with Voldemort being eliminated and the death of the Potters. Until then, we have to get Harry to a safe place."

Alexia said, "Bring him to Hogwarts to stay with me and he'll be safe here with us."

Dumbledore replied, "I can not do that at this time. If I understand everything correctly, Sirius Black has betrayed the Potters and given away their location because he was their secret keeper."

Alexia responded heatedly, "I know that Sirius is not the secret keeper. James and Lily agreed to change it to Peter earlier today. It was based on Sirius' recommendation because he knew that he was going to be a bigger target than Peter."

"I don't believe that Voldemort has been defeated. Something does not seem right to me. I also know that Lily placed a protection charm on Harry that in the case that she should die defending Harry than he will be protected by blood magic. You must calm down Alexia. I can not allow Harry to stay with you."

Alexia was yelling, "You can not leave Harry with the Dursleys. I repeat, can not. James and Lily specifically stated that under no circumstance are they to get custody of Harry. Those people are

horrible. Mark my words Albus, if you leave him there than you will be robbing Harry of his life." She got up and made to leave the castle.

Dumbledore asked, "Where are you going Alexia?"

Alexia said, "I'm going to go get Harry. I will not allow you to do this to Harry."

Professor McGonagall said, "Alexia, you must trust the Headmaster. He knows what he is doing." There were nods from the rest of the faculty.

Dumbledore stood up and said, "I can not allow you to take Harry. He is more important than you realize."

Alexia turned around and said, "If I didn't know any better, Harry is nothing more than a tool in your master plan and not a child."

Dumbledore nodded while saying, "To sacrifice one life for the greater good out weighs what we want. We all know that if we had to make that choice than we would die to protect those we love and more importantly the wizarding world."

Alexia pointed her hand at Dumbledore and yelled, "Yes! Each one of us chose that but Harry did not. He is a person and as a person has a right to live his life how he sees fit!"

Alexia left the office and made her way to Godric's Hollow but it was too late. Hagrid had already retrieved Harry and was making his way to Privet Drive to meet Dumbledore and she made her way to Privet Drive. When she got to Privet Drive, there were Aurors waiting for her when she arrived. The Aurors approached her and said, "Alexandria Rapp, you are to come with us for questioning concerning Sirius Black."

Alexia was at her wits end and said, "What now? Why should I follow you, I haven't done anything wrong and how did you know I was here?"

One of the Aurors said, “Dumbledore informed us of your location and we need to talk to you about Sirius Black being the Potter’s secret keeper plus the murder of Peter Pettigrew.”

“I’ll come with you momentarily, but there is something that I must do first.”

“We’re sorry but you have to come with us now.” They pointed their wands at her and Alexia decided that she would come back afterwards for Harry. She accompanied the Aurors to the Ministry of Magic. When she entered the interrogation room she saw that Hestia Jones and Emmeline Vance who were members of the Order were waiting in the room.

The Auror turned to Hestia and asked, “Is she the lady that you were talking about?”

Hestia and Emmeline nodded. He said, “Thank you for your time. We’ll take it from here.”

The Auror turned to Alexia while the ladies were leaving the interrogation room without looking at her and said, “Ms. Rapp, we believe that you are in the conspiracy to betray the Potters, which resulted in the death of Lily and James Potter tonight.”

Alexia asked incredulously, “How can you think that? There’s no proof that would point to that.”

The Auror looked on with disgust spat out, “We recently received a message from Dumbledore about the conspiracy between you and Mr. Black. We are within our rights to take you to Azkaban right away on the words of Albus Dumbledore. But because of Dumbledore, he felt that it would be better for the greater good if you left Great Britain and never return or you will face consequences and your child will face consequences. Dumbledore said to tell you that he said, ‘This is for the greater good and it would be best if you not see Harry. You are also to keep quiet about Sirius.’”

End Flashback

Alexia said, "That was the story that happened last night. The Aurors escorted me home that night and made sure that I was not allowed to leave. The next day, I was escorted to the Ministry with Kayla and sent away to the States where Kayla and I started our life over."

To say that Harry was angry would be an understatement. He was managed to keep from yelling at everybody in the room but the anger in his voice could be heard when he said, "I'm tired of Dumbledore playing God with my life. In one night, he managed to get Sirius sent away to suffer in Azkaban, get rid of my Godmother, and sentence me to a childhood of torture." He was breathing really hard.

Ginny asked the question that Harry was thinking but was too angry to say. She asked, "Why now? How is it that you are back now?" Harry looked at Ginny and she could see the thanks in his eyes for asking the question while squeezing each other's hands.

Kayla said, "That took quite a bit of planning really. Mom told me the story a while back and after years of planning with the help of my own Headmaster from the States, we were able to convince Dumbledore with the exchange program which included a threat that we would come find you anyway to tell you the story."

Alexia said, "I think that after what happened at the end of last year Dumbledore did this to try not to bring more heat on himself because he knew that you were already upset with him. I know that he didn't expect for us to be here at Christmas because the original deal was for Kayla to come see you and not me but we figured that if he was going to set us up and betray us then we had a right to set things straight."

Ginny looked at Harry with worry-filled eyes and asked, "Harry, what are you thinking?"

Harry was silent for a while then said, "I'm not sure what to think. I know that I am now pretty much at war with Dumbledore but I don't know what to make of you two." He took a few deep breaths then said, "It's just I know that I would have had a better life if I was with you two just because anything would have been better than being with the Dursleys. I know why you left and I can't really blame you for wanting

to protect Kayla because in all honesty, I would do anything to protect her also.” Kayla gave him a warm smile while he continued on saying, “I just hate being lied to and deceived and that was exactly what the two of you did to me just like Dumbledore has been doing to me all these years.”

Alexia and Kayla were hurt at the last comment about being compared to Dumbledore. They didn’t refute it though because they knew it was true. Harry asked, “Are you holding anything else from me?”

Kayla said, “Mom has been training me to help you over the last few years. We knew that when we heard you say that Voldemort returned then we needed to help you. Well, mom can only stay here temporarily and due to the holiday with all the travel that takes place she managed to get her paperwork shuffled and “lost” with all the rest. She’ll have to go back before the New Year. Nobody knew about it which was why Professor Lupin was so surprised when she came here. I know that Dumbledore was surprised also but didn’t say anything when he actually saw my mom even though you said that she was coming. It’s ironic that a man that spent a year being ridiculed by the wizards of Britain that he wouldn’t believe the only other man that was shouting the same message. Well, I’m getting off the point. I have also been watching the people around you and monitoring their actions closely. You would be surprised at what I learned.”

Harry asked, “I’m not sure anything you can say would surprise me at this point.”

Kayla asked, “Harry did you know that I was approached by Dumbledore to spy on you?”

Harry said, “Why is it that I am not surprised? So I guess you’re the personal spy on me. I wouldn’t be surprised that there was a spy on you and others to keep an eye on me also.”

Kayla nodded and said, “I know that there are other spies but I don’t think that you realize to the extent that you were being spied upon. I agreed to being his spy after giving a long acting run of convincing

the old man that he can trust me but I know that he still doesn't but at least I can sit in some of the low priority meetings. What he didn't know was that I used the opportunity to leave some listening charms in strategic places so I can listen to the more important meetings." She paused for a moment then said, "I don't think that you're going to like this but you've been spied on by the older members of the Order and a few young recruits. Almost everybody part of the Order has been spying on you except for Remus and Tonks who are adamantly against it but were not allowed telling you about it but they didn't really worry about it because they figured that you knew already."

Harry replied, "I see that I've been betrayed to a larger extent than I thought."

Kayla said, "It gets worse than that. A few of the people that you trust have betrayed you. I mean some of the closest people to you. Ron, Hermione, and the Weasley twins were inducted into the Order last year before your rescue from the Dursleys. Apparently, they are under orders to act like they were not allowed in but were actually members under the agreement that they were not to go on any missions and they would tell the rest of the Order on everything that you did. That was why Ron and Hermione were made prefects. Hermione was not a surprise but Ron was given it so he would have an excuse to come to meetings in Dumbledore's office or report to McGonagall. The twins would just pull some kind of prank and get detention where they would report your actions."

Harry's eyes were closed due to all of the anger that was coursing through him which was being felt by Kayla, Alexia, and Ginny. He asked in a soft yet angry voice, "Who else has betrayed me?"

Kayla said, "Luna and Neville were approached. I believe that it was their job to spy on me, Hermione, and Ron to make sure that we did not turn and tell you. I honestly don't know if they took the job or not. Ginny was also approached."

At the mention of her name, Ginny jumped up and said, "I was never approached. I will never betray Harry like that!"

Kayla calmly said, "Ginny, calm down. You wouldn't know that they approached you."

Ginny angrily said, "Are you saying that I'm too stupid to realize when somebody is trying to get me to betray Harry?"

Kayla shook her head and said, "Ginny, they did approach you at the beginning of the school year but they obliterated you because you were so much against it and threatened to tell Harry all about it. Dumbledore didn't believe that you were bluffing so he obliterated you."

That calmed Ginny down a great deal. She retook her seat next to Harry and said, "Harry, I promise that I will not betray you. Though, I'm not sure what to do about my family."

Harry said to Ginny, "I don't want to get between you and your family. I think that it would be good if you sided with your family instead of me."

Ginny shook her head and said, "Harry, I am going to do what I believe is right. That is one thing that I learned from my family. They believe what they are doing is right and I believe that I am doing is right. Just as long nobody sides with Voldemort than at least I don't have to worry about killing or being killed by my family."

Harry replied, "Are you sure about this Ginny? I know that you love your family very much."

Ginny nodded and gave him an affectionate kiss on the lips. After they broke apart she said, "I promise to stand by you as long as you are doing what I believe is right."

Harry nodded and said, "That is all I can ask of you is to stand by me as long as you believe that what you are doing is right."

Harry turned to Kayla and asked, "Why Ginny? It seemed risky to get so many people involved and there are so many holes in this plan."

Alexia said, "It is a risky plan but Hermione and Ron had to be taken together. They were extremely loyal to you before but Hermione is too idealistic and trustworthy of Dumbledore and Ron's affections for her combined with his jealousy of you made them perfect because they were your best friends. Kayla would be the surprise element and if something was said about her than you would more than likely trust your two best friends over anything that she said. Kayla is also very well trained in spying and stealth movements. Neville and Luna would be good to keep an eye on everybody because nobody would suspect the supposedly airy crazy girl and the supposedly scared spineless boy. Ginny would have been the best of all of them because from what I was told, everybody could see the developing relationship between the two of you and the only question was when the two of you would become a couple. Once she became your girlfriend, you would more than likely tell her things that you keep hidden from Ron and Hermione. The twins are geniuses although many will not acknowledge that and at the rate that they invent things like their extendable ears they would be of great use to the Order in other matters outside of you."

Kayla said, "There's more Harry. Do you remember the poisoning that you went through prior to the first challenge?"

Harry nodded and Kayla continued on saying, "Well, you were poisoned by both Ron and Hermione. Only one of them was supposed to administer the poison but both of them did it due to lack of communication. That is why the poison had such a big affect on you."

Harry asked, "Who ordered it?"

Kayla said, "Dumbledore ordered it because he was getting frustrated that he couldn't keep tabs on you all summer long and to make it worse you come back and don't give him the details on what you've been doing. Also the display of Occlumency and Legilimency you did on Snape over the summer didn't help his situation very much. Apparently, Dumbledore has been enjoying the subtle detours into your mind. That is how he knows so much about you and what you have done in the past."

Harry said, "So Dumbledore is doing everything he can to keep me under his thumb. I knew something was wrong at the end of the last school year when I forced his hand and he had to tell me about the prophecy. He continues to play this game but how could I have missed everything though. All of this was happening so close to me."

Kayla said, "Everything was very subtle. You have to keep in mind that most of the time they had little to nothing to report and most of the time it was just to say what was happening in the DA. I wouldn't have suspected that my best friends were betraying me either if I was in your shoes. I didn't know about the poisoning until they talked to Dumbledore the next day while Ginny was talking to you out by the lake after the competition."

Harry asked, "How do I know that you're not lying to me right now?"

Alexia said, "That would be something that Mad Eye would say and you do have a right to know if this is the truth or not." She turned to Kayla and said, "Let him do it."

Kayla nodded and said, "Harry, we know that you can perform Legilimency so I want you to do it to my memory. I ask that you please don't abuse my trust and break into areas of privacy but I will try to push the images of what I was talking about to the front so you can access them easier."

Harry nodded and without a word and without a wand he looked into Kayla's eyes and thought Legilimens. At first Harry was a little disoriented until he stumbled upon a memory of Kayla following Ron and Hermione from a far. She followed them all the way to the Headmaster's office and hopped on the stairs after she heard the door to his office open. She was standing outside of the office eavesdropping. She heard Dumbledore ask, "Are there any news on Mr. Potter?"

A girl's voice that was undoubtedly Hermione's said, "We just left from another DA meeting. There doesn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary and Harry was just teaching us some of the more advanced protection spells."

A guy's voice that was Ron's said, "Yeah, everything is normal if you don't count the fact that he let those slimy Slytherins into the DA. I don't trust them one bit and I can't believe that Harry trusts them that much."

Hermione said, "The Slytherins deserve just as much of a right as everybody else to be able to defend themselves. Not all Slytherins are evil Ron. I don't trust them either but I'll humor Harry for now."

Dumbledore asked, "Did the Slytherins exhibit any suspicious behavior? Why did Mr. Potter allow them to join?"

Hermione said, "There wasn't anything weird that I know of other than they stayed after the meeting to talk to Harry about something but I suspect it was only to thank him for letting them join. Harry wanted to let the Slytherins in because he felt that he can use all the allies he can."

Dumbledore asked, "Do you know when the next meeting will take place?"

Ron said, "Harry didn't mention when we will be meeting next but the watch that we gave you should let you know when. Professor, have you been able to adjust the watches to track Harry?"

Dumbledore said, "I haven't been able to reverse the charms on the watch." There was a pause then he said, "You two go off to the dorms now and keep me posted on what Mr. Potter does."

At hearing that, Kayla ran off towards the Gryffindor Common Room hoping that she would not run into anybody and that nobody noticed that she was missing. All of a sudden the images disappeared and another image popped up again in the Headmaster's office but Kayla was part of the meeting with Ron, Hermione, Dumbledore, McGonagall, Ginny, Remus, and Tonks present.

Ginny was yelling, "How can you do this to Harry? He stands by and defends each and every one of you with his life and you all turn around and betray him. How can you?"

Hermione said, "We have to do what is best for everybody and if that means having to do this to Harry than so be it."

Ron said, "Hermione's right. At the rate that Harry is going at he's going to get himself killed anyway so we might as well kill two birds with one stone."

Ginny yelled, "He is your best friend. He would die for you two and you turn on him like this. The two of you make me sick and you can count on me letting him know what lousy friends he has here." She turned around and left but was hit by a spell which erased her memory of what happened just now.

Harry saw enough and pulled out of Kayla's memory. He turned to Ginny and said, "It's true Gin. I just saw the memory with them Obliviating you." He paused for a moment then said, "I wonder what else he is hiding from me that nobody else knows about. There's no telling what he's not saying if you all know that much."

Alexia said, "There is one more major thing Harry. Only I know about it because Lily entrusted me with it. She gave me a copy of James and Lily's last wishes concerning you Harry just in case something were to happen to Dumbledore and his copy was lost. She gave it to me a few days before you and your family went into hiding. I don't know if Sirius got a copy of the letter." She reached into her pocket and handed Harry a letter that said:

Albus,

James and I wanted to make sure you had a copy of this letter to make sure that Harry is taken care of in the event that both of us should die. We truly hope that in the event that it should happen that Harry will be moved to stay with either Sirius or Alexia. Under no circumstances should they go to my only living relatives which are the Dursleys for they would only abuse Harry. Make sure that Harry knows that we loved him very much and keep him from harm. Please make sure that this one wish is fulfilled above all else.

James and Lily Potter

Ginny was reading the letter as Harry was reading it. The two of them became really angry when they finished and only calmed down slightly at the request of Kayla and Alexia. Harry handed the letter back to Alexia but she declined and said, "Harry that letter is rightfully yours because it was your parents' wishes."

Harry carefully folded the letter up and placed it into his pocket. Ginny asked Harry, "What are you going to do now?"

Harry sighed then said, "I think that its time for me to finally let them know exactly who they are messing around with. I don't think that you all are going to like it though."

Kayla asked, "What is it that we are not going to like?"

Harry said, "I think that first I'm going to expel everybody from Potter Mansion and lock this place down and make sure that this place is secure because there is no telling what else they might have snuck in that I don't know about." He paused then said, "I'm sorry but that includes you all also but you all can stay at Grimmauld Place. It should be safe enough for everybody there and if I felt like unleashing some anger on the Order and those traitors then I won't be damaging something priceless that belonged to my family."

Ginny hugged him and said, "I understand Harry. I think that you should know that there will be a chance that my parents will pull me back to the Burrow to get away from you while you unload on the Order, but I will do everything I can to be by you. I love you and will do anything for you."

Harry replied, "Thank you Ginny. I hope that they don't take you away either but don't forget the Gryffindor pin that I gave you for Christmas. It will take you to me whenever you want and will take you back to the exact spot that you left from."

Ginny nodded and gave him another kiss on the lips. When they were done Harry turned to Kayla and Alexia and said, "Sorry about that just now. I know you don't want to watch the two of us kissing. Are you two fine with what I'm about to do?"

Alexia said, "Harry, we're by your side so you can count on us. I'll do whatever I can to help you but don't know of how much help I will be considering I will have to leave soon."

Harry nodded and said, "Thank you. We will have more time to get to know each other better later on and if you ever want to than feel free to come here or Grimmauld Place. Just send an owl whenever you would like to come. Can I owl you though so we can get to know each other?"

Alexia got up and went around the table to give Harry a hug. She said, "Of course and if you need anything just let me know." Kayla also agreed with her mom and gave Harry a hug also.

Harry didn't want to face the traitors yet and wanted to spend time with his Godmother and what he now considered sister. The four of them talked awhile longer on lighter subjects to calm each other down but knew that once they headed back to the house then all hell will break loose.

Chapter 24

Potter vs The Order

Harry, Ginny, Kayla, and Alexia were talking to each other when they were interrupted by Ron yelling, "Everybody, dinner time!" At the hearing of Ron's voice Harry's temper flared and energy could be felt flowing off of him. While trying to keep his anger in control he said, "I'm not sure how long I will be able to keep my anger in check so just be careful."

The three ladies nodded and the group made their way back to the house. When they entered the room everybody was already in the dining room getting ready to eat. The four of them sat off to one side of the table while Ginny placed a comforting hand on Harry to help him calm down while trying to keep her own anger in check. The four of them were quiet for most of dinner until Hermione asked, "How come the four of you are so quiet? What did you all do today?"

Kayla knew that if either Harry or Ginny spoke then all the energy they were spending on keeping their anger in control would be lost. She answered for the group and said, "We were just talking to each other and playing with a few pets."

The rest of the table gave each other some quick glances as to what they talked about and hoped that they didn't tell Harry the truth of what has been going on. All of them silently reasoned to themselves that if Harry didn't come storming in and yelling at everybody than Alexia and Kayla must not have told. At the end of dinner Dumbledore stood up and said, "I would like everybody here to come to Grimmauld Place tonight for a meeting. There is something that needs to be discussed and most of the order is not allowed here and it would be best done when everybody is together."

Everybody agreed to leave and Harry had already instructed to start taking people back to Grimmauld Place but not to take them back to Potter Mansion. Harry also instructed the house elves to start to pack up all of the guests' belongings and take them to Grimmauld Place when everything is packed and everybody has left already. Before he left, he also reset the wards so that he was the only person that can return with the exception of Ginny, Kayla, and Alexia.

Harry was the last one to leave and with the assistance of Nightlight, he appeared in his bedroom at Grimmauld Place. Ginny was waiting for him there along with Kayla and Alexia. He told them what he did and took a few deep breathes before he went down. The group came down together and sat to the back of the kitchen as Order members showed up. Ron and Hermione came in and wanted to sit with Harry and Ginny but there were no room left around them so they ended up sitting with Luna and Neville near the middle of the room. Everybody that Harry knew to be in the Order were there including Remus, Tonks, the entire Weasley family, and the rest of his supposed friends. Hermione's parents decided that they were going to go home and get ready for work the next day.

When everybody was there, Dumbledore stood up and said, "We are here for a special meeting of the Order of the Phoenix."

Molly stood up and said, "Albus, should the children be here for this?"

Dumbledore said, "Yes, this meeting is mainly about them. I would like to induct them into the Order of the Phoenix."

Snape stood up to Harry's surprise because he didn't even notice the man come in. Snape said, "You can't be serious. Potter is a menace and can not be depended on for anything."

Dobby popped in again and with Winky this time. Winky said, "You will not insult Harry Potter. Harry Potter is a great wizard and you are only here because he allowed you to come into his home for meetings of the Order. If you speak badly of Harry Potter then Winky will dispose of you."

Dobby nodded and Snape went pale at the thought of being booted out of the building again and humiliated in front of so many people. Harry looked on displaying no emotion on his face while Dumbledore and McGonagall looked pleadingly at Harry to stop the house elves. Harry still didn't say anything and Snape said, "Potter, are you going to control these elves of yours?"

Harry just continued to look on and say nothing. The twins wanted to laugh so hard at the desperation in Snape's voice. Dobby said, "Apologize to Harry Potter."

Snape said, "I'm not going to apologize to Potter." He turned to Harry and said, "Potter, if you don't control them then I will do it."

Winky said, "You is going to apologize to Harry Potter."

Snape pulled out his wand but the elves were too quick for him and immediately shot him against the wall again. They popped next to him and took his wand. The two house elves grabbed the potions master by his legs and started to drag him out. Dumbledore said, "Dobby, Winky, stop what you are doing." He said to Harry, "Harry please ask the house elves to leave the professor alone so we can continue on with this meeting."

While void of emotions, Harry said, "Who started this disturbance? Did Snape, me, Dobby, or Winky start this?"

Dumbledore said, "Harry, it is Professor Snape. It is not important who started it but to end it now so we can start."

Harry replied, "You didn't answer my question. Did I provoke Snape in any way?" He purposely did not use the word professor because to Harry, he wasn't one.

Dumbledore said, "You did not provoke Professor Snape, Harry. Now will you tell the house elves to stop?"

Harry asked, "Why do you allow him to get away with such disrespect? He is in my house yet he does not feel to pay me or anybody here any respect. It is also interesting that you always seem to allow him to do so."

Dumbledore sighed then said, "He is important to the cause Harry and therefore I give him certain benefits. Professor Snape will give you respect Harry from now on."

Harry nodded and said, "Dobby, Winky, please let him go. If he disrespects me or anybody else in this house again than feel free to evict him and never permit him to return in this house."

Dobby and Winky let the potions master go. Snape stood up and tried to walk back to his seat with dignity. When he got to his seat, Snape said, "My wand."

Harry asked, "What is the magic word?"

Snape was fuming at Harry's baiting but one look from the Headmaster and he relented. Snape said, "Please."

Harry nodded and Dobby threw Snape his wand before the two house elves disappeared. There was muffled giggling from a few people because of Snape's submission to Harry. Dumbledore said, "Alright now to the meeting at hand. There is one major issue tonight which is I would like to admit Harry, Ginny, Ron, Hermione, Kayla, Neville, Luna, Fred, and George into the Order."

There were loud discussions for and against letting the kids in but Harry muttered to Ginny, "Why are they putting on this act?"

Ginny whispered back, "I think that they're starting to brace themselves for what Kayla and Alexia weren't supposed to tell you yet."

Harry nodded and heard Molly yell, "You can not be serious. Ginny is too young for this. It's too dangerous."

Ginny wanted to jump up and yell back but Harry held her back and whispered, "Let them play this game and watch how they play it out."

Ginny nodded as Dumbledore said, "I would not recommend this course of action if it wasn't necessary. We all know that Harry is the key to everything."

Molly calmed down with some words from Mr. Weasley, Bill, and Charlie. Snape stood up and said, "We can not allow them to join.

They are reckless as evident in what they did at the end of the last school year which resulted in a death.”

McGonagall said, “I am inclined to agree with Severus here. The kids are just not ready.”

This was a surprise to many people because nobody has heard McGonagall openly oppose what Dumbledore said. Dumbledore responded, “They do have much to learn but we will teach them. It is important that they are part of this group so that incidents like last year don’t happen again. All in favor than please raise your hands.”

About three fourths of the room raised their hands along with a few people that were opposed to it at first but didn’t want to vote against the leader like Molly and McGonagall. After the vote, Dumbledore said, “I would like to welcome Harry, Hermione, Ron, Ginny, Neville, Luna, Kayla, Fred, and George into the Order.”

There was some congratulatory clapping but the interesting thing to Harry was that Ron, Hermione, Neville, Luna, Fred, and George were not at all surprised with the events that just happened. Apparently, they knew that this was going to happen. Dumbledore said, “Since you are now a member Harry, we would like for you to open up Potter Mansion to the Order.”

Harry looked at Dumbledore like he was stupid for asking that question and Harry said, “No. I will not open it up.”

McGonagall stood up and said, “Mr. Potter, you will give the Headmaster the respect that he deserves. What Professor Dumbledore just said was not a request but an order and as a member of this organization, you are to obey.”

Right when McGonagall said those words, she wanted to take them back. Harry stood up and Ginny stood with him as he said, “I will not submit just because the Headmaster wants me to.” Harry said Headmaster like it was a plague threatening everybody in the room.

Hermione stood up and yelled, “Harry, what is wrong with you. You are a member of the Order now and you should listen to what the

Professor says! There really is no reason for you not to open up Potter Mansion to everybody because it seems like that place is safer than Grimmauld Place.”

Harry was getting angry now and the waves of energy were flowing from him. Almost everybody in the room could feel all the magic that he was emitting. Harry asked in a calm yet cold voice, “Who in this room has not betrayed me?”

Everybody in the room froze at what they just heard. Almost everybody was thinking, how did he find out, does he know, how much does he know, or what’s going to happen now? Ron stood up and did the acting job of his life when he said, “Nobody here betrayed you Harry. We are here for you and will always be here to help you.”

Harry said, “Dobby, Winky, Ray, and Rain, can you all come here?”

The four house elves popped into the room and Harry asked, “Are all the instructions that I gave you earlier completed?”

Ray said, “We have completed everything Harry Potter sir has asked.”

Harry replied, “Thank you. I have another task to ask of. Will you please bring a few bottles of Veritaserum for me?” The four house elves nodded and disappeared only to appear a moment later with each of them carrying a bottle with the clear and odorless liquid.

Harry said, “If what you are saying is the truth then everybody in this room will not have a problem with submitting to this test.”

Hermione said, “Harry, you’ve been our best friend for how many years and you have so little trust in us?”

Harry replied, “I could say the same about you.”

That confirmed it for everybody that Harry knew something that was going on that he wasn’t supposed to know. Now the question becomes, how much and what does he know. Harry walked around to the front and said, “Well, it’s interesting that nobody in this room will

submit to a simple test. I've already taken the liberty to lock down Potter Mansion to ensure the security of my home."

Ron asked, "What about our stuff? We have to go back to get it."

Harry said, "I have already taken the liberty of sending all of your things here already. The house elves finished that just a while ago and you will find all of your things in your rooms here."

Hermione said, "That was not necessary Harry."

Dumbledore added on to what Hermione just finished saying with, "That was very drastic what you did. Do you place so little trust in us? We've been looking out for your interest for over a year now as a group."

Harry looked at Ginny. She walked over to him and said, "There are many secrets here, that let's just say, Harry does not particularly like. As a matter of fact, he absolutely hates them and I agree with him. I'm always surprised when it comes to those who have betrayed me and now Harry." She was looking over at her family when she talked about betrayal.

Dumbledore asked, "Why don't you tell me what it is that you know and if it is wrong then we will correct it."

Harry shook his head and said, "I don't particularly like to play mind games Professor and this would be much easier if you were to confess everything to Ginny and me and we will confirm if that is what we heard or not."

McGonagall said, "Do you have so little respect for everybody now Mr. Potter?"

Harry replied, "I only respect those that I can trust and right now there are only three people that I do trust right now in this room. It is quite simple really, I have always given my trust to people easily but once that trust is betrayed then the only way to get it again is to go to Hell and back. So the question now becomes, who is ready to go to hell and back."

Ginny said, "Harry, I think that you should consider locking down Grimmauld Place also considering how little we can trust them."

Dumbledore interjected, "That will not be necessary. We must work together if we are to survive this war. Harry please think about it."

Harry said, "Ginny, you know I might just have to do that. I have always hated lies and when it comes from those that I thought I could trust and thought of as family, it just hurts so much more. The Order of the Phoenix is no longer allowed to spy on me, stalk me, and control my life anymore."

Dumbledore said, "Harry, you are a part of the Order now and will have to listen to what is agreed upon here."

Harry shook his head and said, "Who said anything about me wanting to be in the Order? You all took it upon yourselves to put me in this group without consulting withme. I am really tempted to kick everybody out right now but the two of us have the same goal which is to remove Voldemort." Many people shuddered at the name as Harry continued on to say, "This is really sad. How is it that you all are going to fight against a man that you can't even say or stand to hear his name?"

Snape said, "Don't you dare disrespect us like that. All of a sudden, you think that you're more important than the rest of us. How arrogant can you really get? Just like your pathetic father and mudblood mother."

At that moment, the house elves disarmed Snape and hit him with a few bludgeoning spells then threw the man out of the house. Dumbledore asked, "Will you please let him back into the house?"

Harry shook his head and said, "I warned him already and everybody here heard me warn him. You may not back up what you say but I do."

Molly interjected, "Harry, I am tired of this blatant disrespect of the Headmaster and everybody else in this room. We did what we did to ensure your protection."

Harry replied, "I can only respect those that respect me and obviously you all don't respect me when you launch a series of spies to monitor everything that I do plus setup innocent people to take the fall for things that you all know they did not do."

Molly replied, "It is obvious that you no longer want us around. My family will leave so you don't have to worry about us."

Bill said, "Come on Ginny, you're coming with us."

Ginny shook her head and said, "I'm staying here with Harry. In case you don't know, I know what you did to me also."

Charlie asked, "What are you talking about?"

Ginny yelled back, "The fact that the Order tried to get me to spy on Harry! And when I refused you all erased my memories of the event! To think that I used to look up to the people in this room! At least now I know the truth and prefer to live with the truth than live a life of lies."

Bill asked, "What are you talking about? We don't know anything about that."

Ginny said, "Talk to your little brother over there," she was pointing at Ron, "Hermione and him were trying to get me to spy on Harry for the Order and when I didn't agree they Obliviated me so that nobody would know about it."

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Bill, and Charlie yelled, "What?" Mrs. Weasley turned to Ron and asked, "Is this true?"

Ron said, "It was for what is best. We needed to find out about what Harry was hiding and we knew that if he was telling anybody then it would be Ginny."

Charlie yelled at Ron, "What the hell were you thinking? She's your sister and you treat her like that. No wonder Ginny and Harry are so mad at the whole Order. There's no telling what else you have done that we don't know about. Whose idea was this because you obviously don't have the brain to think of anything but yourself."

Dumbledore said, "That was my plan. Everybody knows the importance Harry plays in everything and we must know everything that he is doing. He was less than forth coming with information so we had to find other means."

Harry lost it at that moment and yelled out at Dumbledore before Charlie could respond. The magical energy was flowing off of him and intimidated most of the people in the room as they slowly pulled away from the teenager. Harry yelled, "What gives you the right to determine what is right for me! I can make my own decisions and as far as I know of so far, every bad decision I've made so far was due to the lack of information that was withheld from me by you and the Order! You are not my parent! You're not even my guardian! Who gave you the authority to destroy my life and allow you to use me nothing more than a pawn! Everything that you have said or done ever since I met you has been a lie!"

McGonagall lost her temper and came to the defense of the Headmaster. She was yelling at Harry, "How dare you talk to the Headmaster like that! He has been taking care of you and even bending the rules to help you! You are being selfish right now Mr. Potter and I will have no more of it!"

Ginny was whispering to Harry in an attempt to calm him down. Harry managed to regain some composure when he heatedly said, "Since when did I ask for special privileges? Everything that I've gone through has related to Dumbledore in some way. He has either been setting up traps for me to fall into and fight my way out or I've been cleaning up his mess."

McGonagall said, "You are really arrogant if you believe that to be true."

Harry responded, "What's really pathetic is that you truly believe that. Anybody who knows me knows that I absolutely hate attention. The times that I am in the lime light are when I am trying to do something for someone else or someone brings the attention to me. Since you fail to see where I am coming from than let's run through my history with Dumbledore. The first year with the Sorcerer's Stone, all of the supposedly secure methods of protecting the stone only relied on one thing which was enough security. That one thing was the Mirror of Erised. Everything else was nothing more than challenges because you didn't bother to place detection charms or wards that would have better protected the area around the stone. It is convenient though that all that was required was a first year's knowledge to make it through everything. My second year, Dumbledore and the faculty failed to protect the students and once again a group of Gryffindors had to clean up the mess that has been around since the days that Dumbledore was a professor. My third year was mostly filled with the lies of Sirius was dangerous and was coming to kill me but interestingly enough he was coming to protect me. Dumbledore knew that Sirius was innocent but wanted to keep me away from Sirius. As the story continues the same group of Gryffindors had to come to the rescue and fight to free Sirius but also defend the students from Dementors that almost killed Hermione, Sirius, and me. Interestingly enough that year, Dumbledore finally brings in a Defense teacher that knows what he is saying and knows how to teach unlike Snape who likes to verbally abuse students. Now let's go on to fourth year where Dumbledore's supposed fool proof method of protecting those not supposed to compete failed and my name was entered by an imposter that Dumbledore hired to teach Defense. I will say that he was a competent teacher but not as much as Remus. Then later on in the year Pettigrew gets this great plan of his to resurrect Voldemort. I will accept that part of the reason why Pettigrew was there was because I allowed him to live but Dumbledore is also to blame considering he spent so much time hanging over Sirius that he didn't bother trying to hunt down the rat and pretty much opened the way for the second war to start. Now to the all so popular fifth year, where the Headmaster managed to let the Ministry control so much of the school, torture the students, and pretty much set the stage for me to get Sirius killed. I was at fault for it and I will accept that but Dumbledore and Snape were not blameless. Dumbledore ordered Snape to give me occlumency lessons which Snape used as his

opportunities to assault and weaken my mind. Voldemort used my weakened state to plant false messages in my head.”

Moody spoke up and asked, “Potter, what were you saying about the torture of students last year?”

Harry raised his writing hand up to show everybody the words, ‘I will not tell lies,’ imprinted on his hand. He said, “Umbridge tortured all of the students that believed that Voldemort had returned and were brave enough to stand up to her. She placed us in detention and forced us to use a blood quill that imprinted a little message on your hands while we were bleeding out from it. I’m also sure that his spies around me notified him but he didn’t do anything about it.”

There were some glares directed at Ron, Hermione, but mostly at Dumbledore. Dumbledore said, “Harry, it was your job to come tell me if this was going on.”

Harry responded, “What? I come and tell you and you turn the other way. Don’t even try to say that you would have done anything because you didn’t even dare look at me all through last year and made yourself as scarce as possible.”

There were more glares directed at Dumbledore and Emmeline Vance came to his rescue this time as she said, “You all can not seriously expect the Headmaster to stop everything for Potter. He has other responsibilities that he must tend to.”

Harry nodded and surprised everybody when he said, “I agree. The Headmaster does have many things on his plate but I will not be one of those anymore.”

Vance responded, “You can’t be serious Potter. It is our job to watch over you and we intend to do it.”

Harry shook his head and said, “It’s awkward really that one of the criticisms of Death eaters is that they blindly follow their master around without question. It is the same with you all in here. You blindly follow Dumbledore around and you don’t even know the reason why you are doing some of these things.”

A man who Harry didn't recognize said, "How dare you compare us to those Deatheaters? We are defending the light and in some cases we must follow without getting all of the information."

Harry responded, "You all claim to defend the light but how much have you all really done? As far as I can tell, the Order has had little if any effect on every major and minor attack by Deatheaters so far."

A woman that Harry didn't know responded heatedly, "Who are you to judge us. We have been doing this for years and you are nothing more than a kid with a big head."

Ginny responded for Harry, "Many of you think that Harry is arrogant but in a sense he is. You need to be a little arrogant if you are going to face the worst Dark Lord of all time. How many of you can claim to go up against Voldemort five times and survived to talk about it? Every single time it was different and yet he still managed to fight his way out and usually saving somebody while he was at it. If anything you all are pathetic because you can't hear his name and a teenager can fight while staring him in the eyes."

Percy said, "I guess Potter now has you brainwashed into what he wants now Ginny."

Ginny turned her glare on Percy and said, "You should talk. Shouldn't you be up Fudge's ass right now making sure that he keeps it clean or appear to be clean for the public? I chose to stand by him given everything that I know. He has stood by me when I needed him and I will stand by him, for the man he is which is more than anybody else in this room."

Percy angrily responded while approaching Ginny, "Don't you dare talk about me or the Minister like that. You have been around Potter for too long."

Harry walked up to Percy and said, "I know Ginny can take care of herself so I don't have to worry about her but I promise you that if you cross the line with her I will tear you apart one limb at a time."

Percy froze as Harry said those words. Bill said, "Harry, you are not going to threaten anybody in this family and get away with it. My sister may stand by you but I will defend my family before anything else." There were murmurs of agreement from the rest of the family.

Harry responded, "So you choose Percy over Ginny. That is nice to know."

Charlie said, "We did not choose Percy over Ginny but we will defend any of our family if they are threatened." He turned to Ginny and said, "Come on Ginny, you're going home."

Ginny shook her head and said, "I'm not going anywhere. It is you all that is blinded by Dumbledore and resent Harry right now. I am going to do what I believe to be right. That is one thing that our family has always stressed. We always stand by what we believe to be right."

Harry turned to the rest of the Order and said, "I can see that nothing else will be accomplished here tonight so Ginny and I will be leaving. I will allow for the Order to use this house as their meeting space but you all are going to restrict yourselves to the first floor only with the exception of those that are allowed to live here. The house elves will have instructions on what to do to those that trespass into any other part of the house or talk ill of my parents or Sirius. I don't believe that that will be a problem considering Snape will never be allowed back into the house."

Harry walked out of the room followed closely by Ginny. The two of them went to Harry's room which was formerly Sirius' room and stayed there until the Order left. The rest of the kids were left at Grimmauld Place with Lupin and Tonks watching the place while everybody else went home. When Harry left, he heard lots of bickering about what just happened but mostly everybody was demanding answers to what Harry and Ginny were talking about earlier. In one night, Harry managed to shake up the Order and openly announce that he and Dumbledore will be going head to head with anything that concerns him and Voldemort.

Chapter 25

Harry and Ginny

Ginny stayed in Harry's room that night but they didn't sleep in the bed together. After much persistence, Harry managed to convince Ginny to take the bed while Harry slept on the small sofa that he transfigured from the desk chair in the room. Harry woke up early as usual but didn't go through his normal work out routine. Instead, he went down and made some breakfast for both him and Ginny because he knew that she would wake up soon expecting to do some exercises.

When Harry had finished making enough breakfast to feed five people, he carried it up to his room where he found Ginny was just coming out from the shower. Harry said, "Here Ginny, I made some breakfast for the two of us. I don't think we're going to practice today."

Ginny went over to the desk where Harry placed the tray of food and said, "Thank you Harry. In all honesty, I didn't feel like working out either. I was hoping to just stay in here or go back to Potter Mansion. I don't really want to face anybody else today especially since what went on last night." She paused a moment then asked, "Why did you allow the Order to continue to use Grimmauld Place?"

Harry replied, "This way I can keep them nearby and leave the house elves to spy on them like how they have been spying on me."

Ginny nodded and knew that it was a good idea to know what your enemies were up to. She said, "Let's just hope that they don't catch on."

Harry nodded and the two of them ate breakfast in relative silence until Harry asked, "Gin, are you sure you want to side with me against your family?"

Ginny felt a little hurt about his doubt but asked, "Do you not want to be with me anymore?"

Harry replied, "It's not that. I just don't want to come between you and your family that's all. I know that they will be much happier if you just went with them and left me."

Ginny replied, "I'm where I want to be Harry. I love my family and nothing will ever take that away just like I know that they love me and always will love me. We have our differences but I will not abandon them for you and will not abandon you for them. I also know that even though you had a row with my family last night that if they needed help then you will not hesitate to go help them just like I know that they will do the same for you. Believe it or not Harry, but I still think that they see you as a Weasley. Well, maybe not Ron because he's too obsessed with being right, he knows how to hold a grudge and don't expect him to come around anytime soon."

Harry replied, "You're right Ginny. I will not hesitate to come help them if they needed me to and I'm glad that you're here with me. One of my worst fears is to be abandoned; I guess that's why those dreams about my parents and Sirius calling me to them had such a big effect on me. On the other hand, I don't want those around me to be hurt so I have to either be selfish or selfless."

Ginny took his hand and said, "There's nothing wrong with being a little selfish now and then. After all, you have to take care of yourself. There has to be a fine balance between the two and you have to find out what it is but I'll be here to help. I won't abandon you Harry. I promise you. I love you too much to stand by and just watch."

Harry gave her a kiss on the lips then said, "I understand Gin. I love you also and will not abandon you either. I also want to make sure that you're safe and I am now pretty sure that you're in the top three of Voldemort's hit list now since you're my girlfriend. You've join Dumbledore and me on the short list that nobody wants to be on."

Ginny sat in his lap as Harry wrapped his hands around her waist with her hands over his hands while the two of them stared out of the window together. She said, "I know of the risks that came with being your girlfriend and willingly accept them. Just like you said last night, you know that I can take care of myself plus I know that I have you to help me."

Harry sighed then said, "That's something I've been thinking about for a while now and after what happened last night I think that I need to do it. Gin, you know that I've been doing some advanced training which required me reading many books that would either be considered dark or at least considered not good."

Ginny nodded and asked, "What are you leading to Harry?"

Harry replied, "I was reading a book on rare rituals in the Potter library a few days ago and one of the books was about passing on knowledge. It usually is meant to pass down knowledge to those who can't read and write but need to develop those skills quickly or to deaf mutes so they can learn to survive. I was thinking about performing this ritual with you so I can pass everything that I have learned down to you. There is some good and bad to this ritual. Which do you want to hear first?"

Ginny said, "Let's try the bad news that way it won't seem so bad once the good news comes. At least that's what I'm hoping for."

Harry nodded then said, "One of the bad side effects of the ritual is all knowledge goes both ways. Meaning, you will know everything that I have known ever since I was born which includes every secret that I hold and haven't told anybody. In return, I will know everything about you which also includes your secrets. This can only be performed once and takes a few hours to accomplish. After we're done, for about 24 hours we will have no magical abilities so we'll be defenseless for awhile and not to mention the splitting headache that we're going to have for those 24 hours while our brains sort through everything that we learned from each other."

Ginny said, "Well, it doesn't seem too bad. We can always do it at Potter Mansion at least for that time period we know that we'll be safe. I can handle a headache for 24 hours because I've gone through worse. I'm a little nervous about all of my secrets being open to you but I know that you won't abuse the knowledge and if you do I can always use yours against you. So what's the good news?"

Harry said, "I agree that it doesn't seem so bad right now but who knows what kind of memories you are hiding and I really don't want you to have to see the horrors that I've already seen in my life. It will probably help me deal with things better though if you were there to help me. The good news is minus the lack of intensive physical training that I've gone through so far and the difference in our raw magical abilities; we will be equivalent to each other when it comes to magic. We will also get a better understanding of each other's lives but most importantly, I think that this will bring us closer together as a couple."

Ginny nodded then said, "What does the ritual require and how long does it take?"

Harry said, "All that is required is the two of us, a black room, a single candle, and our wands. It will take about sixteen hours because it's about one hour per year from what I was able to figure out from the texts."

Ginny said, "That doesn't seem too bad but a little tiring. When do you want to do this?"

Harry replied, "I was thinking we do it either today or tomorrow. It would be better if we did this as soon as possible just in case something happens but more importantly over the break because we don't want to be left defenseless at school."

Ginny asked, "Can we start after lunch then? Until then, I just want to sit here with you."

Harry nodded and the two of them stayed like that until lunch time. They did come down for lunch and ran into Ron, Hermione, Luna, and Neville but didn't say anything to them. When they did run into Kayla, they told her that the two of them would be going back to Potter Mansion for a day and won't return until the day after. They later explained what they were going to do after Kayla pushed them and agreed that they should do it soon. Kayla decided to spend the time when Harry and Ginny were not around reading some more books on spying because she had a feeling there was going to be a lot of it coming the new semester.

After lunch, Harry used his permanent portkey to take him and Ginny back to Potter Mansion. Harry told her about the vault and what he found in the vault because there was no point in him hiding anything from her anymore because in six hours she was going to find out about it anyway. She was put out at first with him hiding secrets like this but understood that he wanted to have some things up his sleeve should anything happen.

The two of them went into Harry's training room and called for complete darkness in the room. Harry drew a circle on the ground in white chalk that had a blue square inside of it. At one point of the square there was a lion that represented strength that was drawn in yellow, another point had an owl that was drawn in brown to represent wisdom, the corner opposite the owl had a grey dog that stood for loyalty, and in the last corner there was a gold eagle which represented justice. At the center of the square was a simple white candle that was left unlit. The two of them sat down inside of the square.

Harry said, "Take your wand out and place it in front of you with one end pointing at the candle and the other end pointing at you. I'll say the chants and when the ceremony is over you will see the candle in the middle light up. Do you have any questions?"

She shook her head and Harry closed his eyes and started chanting in an unknown language to Ginny but all Harry was doing was saying Latin words in reverse. When he stopped chanting, a three dimensional hologram of the four animals rose from their pictures and floated around the two of them. Their respective wands floated into the air and a silver mist formed between Harry's forehead which went to the wand. At the other tip of his wand, the mist went to the tip of the candle. From the candle the mist went to Ginny's wand and from Ginny's wand to her forehead.

The two of them could feel the information from the other person's life shooting through their heads at an extremely rapid pace. They could also feel themselves fill up with knowledge that they did not know about before but couldn't really distinguish what that knowledge was. The two sat there in silence for sixteen hours as their bodies slowly

started to stiffen but neither wanted the ritual to end so they remained uncomfortable the entire time.

At the end of the ceremony, a small yellow flame started to light up as the wands slowly fell to the ground. The yellow flame slowly turned into orange and from there slowly turned to red. The red flame also had red sparkles erupt from it and it slowly turned into a blue flame with blue sparkles. In the end, the blue flame became a white flame with no sparkles but specks of glitter floating around the two of them that filled the entire room. The white flame gave one large burst then Harry and Ginny fainted.

About an hour later the two of them started to come to their senses but with a severe headache that they could barely stand. The only comfort in the headache was that they went through that ceremony for each other. Harry asked Ginny, "Gin, are you ok?"

Ginny was trying to massage her temples while saying, "I'm fine just the headache was worse than expected. I'll manage though, what about you?"

Harry was also trying to get rid of the headache by massaging his head said, "I'm fine. The headache was worse than expected for me also. Maybe if we can get some sleep the time will go by quicker. Let's go to your room and we'll stay there."

Harry and Ginny made their way to the room that she had been staying in over the break. The house elves assisted them because they could barely move because their bodies were so stiff from not moving for so long. Without even thinking about it, the two of them got into bed together and slipped under the covers with Harry lying with a protective arm around Ginny while they cuddled and slowly fell off to sleep. During their sleep they were dreaming about all the knowledge and events in the other person's lives but at a slower more manageable rate. Their minds seem to be diverting all of its attention to processing everything that it took on. What the two of them didn't realize was they both slept for about eighteen hours.

By the time they woke up their headache had died down a great deal and it was much more manageable now. They went down and had

lunch considering they slept through the night and breakfast. From this experience Harry was amazed at what the youngest Weasley has gone through and understood why her brothers never wanted to get her mad. Ginny on the other hand felt both happy and sad. She felt all the emotions and saw everything he went through at the Dursleys prior to Hogwarts and all the pain he felt at Hogwarts. She was also happy when she saw all the memories of Harry planning stuff while he was the admirer and all the knowledge that she learned. The knowledge that Harry gave to Ginny was enough for her to pass every test through Auror training if she chose to take that path in life and make nothing but 'O's' on all of her examinations including the OWLs and NEWTs.

They decided to stay another day at Potter Mansion to recover and sent word to Kayla about their plans. Harry and Ginny spent the time playing around with all the magic that she just learned and started some training for her to use all the knowledge that she learned. She had little difficulty doing everything and the only thing that really slowed her down was that she was not in the same physical shape as Harry was in but she promised that she would fix that soon enough by physically training with him and since she learned everything for the OWLs already then she would be spending more time with Harry and practicing.

That evening Harry and Ginny were having a nice romantic dinner out on the back porch. Harry reached into his shirt and pulled out the phoenix necklace that he got from his family vault and took off his left wand holster with the rose wand still in it. He gave it to her while saying, "Gin, I want you to take these. The necklace will help to protect you in a fight and we'll get some battle robes for you tomorrow. Here is also one of my back up wands. Wear it on your arm and when you need it just flick your wrist and it will shoot out to your hand as quickly as you can grasp it. The wand gives you two times more strength in your spells with a higher accuracy and when your wand and my rose wand, which is the brother wand to this one, are combined then it will have a bigger effect."

Ginny shook her head and said, "Harry, these belong in your family. I think that you should keep it."

Harry said, "No, I want you to have these. It will help to protect you like it did for me in the past. You need a back up wand and I already have one. There really is no need for me to carry three wands around."

Ginny sighed then said, "Alright Harry. Thank you, I'll take good care of it."

Harry smiled and said, "No problem, how about tomorrow we go to Diagon Alley and get you some matching battle robes."

Ginny nodded and had a pleasant conversation through the rest of their dinner and into the night. The next morning, Harry and Ginny started their day out at 5:30 in the morning with an intense work out to help Ginny to get used to the exercise routine quickly. After that, they went and took separate showers and had a nice breakfast together. When they cleaned up after breakfast, Harry decided to have three house elves on duty at a time and one resting so he could have 24 hour surveillance of Grimmauld Place and still allow the elves to do something relaxing each day. Harry used his portkey to get to the portkey area outside of the Leaky Cauldron and Ginny used hers to follow Harry so she can set her portkey to get back to Potter Mansion in case of an emergency.

The two of them walked hand in hand quickly through the Leaky Cauldron and out the back to Diagon Alley. When they reached Diagon Alley, the two went to the trunk shop to get Ginny a trunk similar to Harry's and to all the stores to stock her trunk with like Harry's trunk. Ginny's battle robes were going to take longer so they went to Gringotts so Harry could get some more money.

When they reached Harry's personal vault, the two went in and Harry gave Ginny a bag while saying, "Gin, I want you to carry some also."

Ginny said, "Harry, you've already gotten me so much today already. You really don't have to do this. I don't care about clothes or toys or money."

Harry replied, "I know. I'm not trying to pay you off or anything. I just thought that it would be good that you should have money to use at

your discretion. Besides, I've already instructed the Goblins to allow you access to my vault whenever you need to."

Ginny replied, "Harry this really isn't necessary, it's as if we're a married couple already."

Harry said, "You're right. We're not married and probably not until you finish school but I really only think of that as a formality because to me, you're the only person that I intend to be with."

Ginny blushed at first because of Harry talking about getting married to her then smiled and said, "You know Mr. Potter, you are definitely getting better with words as everyday passes. I feel the same way and I know that this seems so quick but I feel that you're my one and only as well.

They gave each other a long kiss and after gathering the necessary gold to continue to have fun, or to spend while at Hogsmeade weekends. They still had a little bit more time before Ginny's robes would be ready so they decided to share an ice cream together. That's when Ginny noticed some awkward behavior from a few people around them like a person across the street reading a newspaper upside down while peeking over it at them or a couple that seemed to like to roll a stroller in circles close to where they were sitting. Ginny nudged Harry and pointed subtly to the awkward behaviors.

Harry knew what she was trying to imply and said, "Yeah, they've been following us ever since we exited Gringotts. I guess somebody told the Order that we were here so they decided to play bodyguards again. I don't recognize those people but wouldn't be surprised if they were wearing glamour charms to conceal themselves."

Ginny nodded and said, "I think that you're right. All of that training you went through is really paying off for me. I thought that I recognized them as well when we were leaving Gringotts but I thought that I was just being paranoid." She looked down at her watch and said, "Harry, my robes should be ready."

Harry nodded and the two of them left the little ice cream parlor. They picked up Ginny's robes and went to a back room to place it in her trunk. The two of them walked out of the shop and noticed the same three people as before had changed locations and were now closer to Madame Malkin's.

The two of them decided to play a prank and walked up to the man that was still reading the newspaper upside down and stood on both sides of him. Harry asked, "Is there anything good in the Prophet today?"

The man just nodded as Harry said, "It's nice to know that you have a gift of reading things upside down and still understanding it. Oh can you tell your two accomplices over there that has been pushing around the stroller in enough circles that there are tracks in the street, that you all can go home now because Ginny and I are leaving."

The man said in a gruff voice, "Potter, what are you thinking, approaching somebody you don't know like that. For all you know I could be a Death Eater watching the two of you."

Harry knew from the way the man talked that it was Mad-Eye so he said, "Well, you might have a hard time taking us on if we're next to you considering both of our wands are on you right now." Harry poked the man in his waist with his wand while Ginny poked the other side of his waist.

Ginny said, "You can go now. Oh you might want to tell the other two to try to choose a better disguise because anybody can see that the two of them are acting suspicious especially since there is no baby inside of the stroller."

Moody shook his head and said, "I told those two that their disguise would not work but they wouldn't listen."

Harry said, "I'll let you get back to handling them because we're off."

Harry and Ginny were laughing at the look of disbelief on being found and disappointment at the two that were with him. The two of them walked off to the side and Harry took Ginny's hand as the two of them

were taken back to Potter Mansion by way of Harry's portkey. They didn't want to use Ginny's anymore so she could get back whenever she wanted.

The two of them spent the rest of the day organizing Ginny's trunk. Ginny went with a similar color scheme as Harry's but with softer colors. Her library was also very extensive in all the fields that they could think of but didn't replicate any books that Harry had in his except for a few standard references and the school texts. All in all the day was very profitable for the merchants on Diagon Alley. The two spent their last night with some training and together in Ginny's trunk before they went to sleep innocently together in her bed. They had a silent agreement of no sex before marriage but liked the feeling of waking up to each other.

Ginny decided to follow Harry's lead and keep the trunk shrunken in her pocket at all times when not at Hogwarts or home during breaks. The two of them spent the morning working out together and had a large breakfast afterwards. After breakfast, the two of them appeared hand in hand in Harry's room at Grimmauld Place. They decided to go see how Kayla was doing and went looking for her.

They found her in the drawing room reading by herself with most of the people in the house gathered in the kitchen for breakfast. Kayla looked up and when she saw the two of them, a smile broke across her face. She placed her book away and said, "How are the two of you this morning? You two seemed much more relaxed and happier than when you left."

After Kayla finished giving each of them a hug, Ginny said, "We've been pretty good. Everything went as expected and we needed that little vacation. We're sorry for leaving you behind but we needed this. How have you been? What's been going on around here?"

Kayla sat back down across the couple and said, "Well, it has been as good as expected I guess. Oh Harry, my mom had to leave a little earlier than expected. Apparently, somebody reported that she wasn't supposed to be here and wanted to leave before more trouble came here. I think it was Dumbledore that said something but I don't have

proof but that's not all that important. She said to owl her and that she was sorry for causing so much trouble."

Harry said, "I'll write her soon and I'm glad that you all told me or else I would be involved even more with the Order's lies."

Ginny said, "Yeah, although it wasn't a great event in people's lives. I'm glad that the truth came out."

Kayla said, "Me too, I like that the truth finally came out. It is a little crazy around here though ever since they found out that the two of you were no longer here but they knew where you went but couldn't get there. It's kind of funny really because they seem to have so little faith in the two of you."

Ginny asked, "What did they do?"

Kayla said, "The afternoon after you two left, Ginny's parents came up to talk to her but couldn't get into the room. Mrs. Weasley started to pound on the door and yell for over an hour. Everybody stood by to watch at first but then tried to hide from all of the yelling. I felt sorry for them so I decided to tell them what happened and all of the Weasleys were up in arms about Ginny running off with Harry doing who knows what."

Harry said, "Well, maybe it was just the heat of the moment. I'm sure they trust Ginny."

Kayla shook her head and said, "That's what I thought too but when that evening the two of you didn't come back, they were trying to blast the door down to your room. That's when Dobby showed up and warned everybody to not destroy your things Harry. You know Harry; you have some really loyal house elves."

Harry replied, "They are really good friends."

Kayla nodded then said, "You won't believe how unbelievably stubborn Snape is. He tried to make his way back into the house but was met by Dobby, Winky, and Rain. The three house elves raised their hands and Dumbledore tried to reason with the house elves but

they stood their ground. Once Snape shot his first insult, Snape was shot out of the house just as the door closed. They also did a pretty good job of keeping Order members who were not staying here from going up the stairs. They didn't even let Dumbledore and McGonagall up the stairs."

Harry told Ginny, "Remind me to do something nice for Dobby, Winky, Ray, and Rain. They've been working pretty hard. Maybe I should just kick everybody out so everything would be much more peaceful."

Ginny nodded as Kayla said, "I'm actually glad that the two of you are back at least now I have somebody that I can talk to. Everybody has pretty much turned their backs on me and it has gotten to a point where I don't even eat with them. Remus and Tonks tried to smooth things out for me with everybody else but it just didn't go very far."

Harry asked, "How are Remus and Tonks doing?"

Kayla said, "They are doing fine I guess. They are a little troubled though because they don't know which side to choose. In general, the lines have been drawn it is either who's going to back up Harry or who's going to back up Dumbledore. Right now, Harry, I think that there is only Ginny and I but I think that maybe Remus and Tonks."

Harry said, "I can understand Remus and Tonks' dilemma. They've followed Dumbledore for so long that it is hard to admit that he was wrong. That's like asking Hagrid to say something bad about Dumbledore."

Ginny said, "What else has been going on?"

Kayla said, "Well, I listened in on a few Order meetings and apparently somebody leaked out the dispute between Harry and Dumbledore to Fudge. Fudge is really happy as far as I can tell. The two people that are probably strong enough to remove him from office are going at it with each other and not paying attention to what he's doing."

Harry asked, "I wonder who told?"

Kayla said, "At first, we thought that it was Percy but it wasn't. I think that there is a mole within the Order for the Ministry of Magic. There is just so many secrets running around that it's hard to keep track of."

Ginny asked, "You said that you don't eat with them anymore so have you eaten breakfast yet? We all can get something together. Harry and I have eaten already but we can get a light snack and join you so you can get something to eat and not be alone."

Kayla replied, "Thanks. I haven't eaten yet. I usually wait until they are done before I go in there. But I should warn you, when you get in there it will not be pretty considering you two were missing for a few days only to turn up a few days later walking together holding hands with smiling facings and having a shopping spree in Diagon Alley."

Harry replied, "Yeah, we knew about the Order finding out about us. We caught them and told them to go leave us alone."

Kayla nodded and said, "That must have been the reason why Mad-Eye and two people I don't know came back all upset yesterday. They were going on and on about how they had good disguises and Moody was thinking that he lost his touch because a couple of teenagers figured him out."

Harry said, "I think that Moody might have been putting on an act though. He's usually not that careless and didn't have to peak over the newspaper to see us considering his magical eye. I think he might have been warning us about being watched."

The other two thought about it and nodded their agreement that it was a possibility. Harry continued on to say, "If that is what happened then I think that they are trying to play another game of cat and mouse with us by making us think that a few members of the Order are siding with us; or they really are siding with us but don't want Dumbledore to know about it."

Ginny said, "If that is the case than we are going to have to keep a better eye out for what is going on around us. This maybe paranoia but maybe we should have a system of letting each other know who

we really are because there is no telling what they will do to get us to give up information now."

Kayla said, "Let's come up with a secret handshake and a password. Whenever an occasion comes to shake hands then we can use the subtle handshake; and use the password whenever we are in doubt about who we are talking to."

Ginny said, "How about our password being St. Potter. That way nobody else around us would use it except for Malfoy so we don't have to worry about it. And the handshake could be like this."

She showed them a handshake where the hands locked like normal but two the two fingers closest to the thumb would go straight along the wrist. For Harry, she showed him a way for the two of them holding hands with a slight variation in how the fingers were locked and then immediately changed to the way they normally held hands; so it wouldn't look weird for the two of them considering they are a couple and would hold hands instead of shaking hands.

After that the three of them checked to make sure that nobody was listening and around with Harry using the x-ray capabilities of his glasses to check. There was nobody around and they went to the kitchen to get some breakfast for Kayla.

Chapter 26

Potter vs. the Ministry

The three of them made their way into the kitchen without greeting anybody and sat down as far away from everybody as possible. Harry and Ginny started to cook a breakfast with eggs, sausages, and some toast for them to eat while Kayla set the table for them. Everybody else in the room was just staring at them at first and many were thinking that these kids were so rude as to not acknowledge everybody else in the room with them.

Remus and Tonks were looking on with amusement at the reaction of everybody especially the Weasleys to Harry and Ginny's return. The silence ended when they finished cooking breakfast and sat down to eat. As expected Kayla was eating the most while Harry and Ginny were just taking bites from some toast and sharing the same glass of orange juice.

Mrs. Weasley recovered first and approached the new trio to sternly say, "Where have the two of you been? What gives you two the right to just run off without letting anybody know?"

Ginny stopped eating and said, "Mum, it's not like Harry and me did anything really bad. We just went to his house to get away from everything for awhile."

Mrs. Weasley responded, "That still did not give you the right to just run off. You should have told somebody?"

Harry and Kayla were both smart enough to stay out of this one as the two Weasley ladies go at it with each other. Ginny said, "We did tell somebody and if you all bothered to ask Kayla earlier then you would have known sooner. It's not like it was some big secret. We didn't do anything considered not honorable either. I thought that you respected and trusted the two of us but apparently not."

Mrs. Weasley said, "Don't you talk to me like that young lady. I had trusted the two of you before but now I'm not sure anymore. Especially after the display at the Order meeting the two of you put on

and running off hiding from everybody afterwards doesn't show the maturity level that I have come to expect from the two of you."

Ginny replied, "I can't believe that you are mad at us for what happened at the Order meeting because it was the Order that got themselves into this with all of your lies. As far as I can tell, the Order has started their lies when Harry was a one year old and still has not stopped. You may choose to follow Professor Dumbledore blindly but I will choose my path with both eyes open and both ears listening. Unlike the rest of the family, I will not just follow somebody because of their reputation."

Ron jumped in and heatedly said, "You blame us for following somebody blindly but you're following Harry just because he is your boyfriend. Some boyfriend you chose there also, about all he is good for is attracting danger."

Ginny turned to her brother as the anger in her was building and angrily said, "I don't choose to follow anybody blindly. I am the one that has made my decisions based on the information that I have received which leads any person with a common sense to follow Harry. Harry has not betrayed anybody here or deceived anyone like Dumbledore has. You forget that Dumbledore was the one that sentenced Harry to a life of hell and it was Dumbledore that was spying on Harry to get any piece of information from him. Dumbledore's spying resorted in the two of you spying on your best friend or I should say former best friend."

Ron's voice rose as he said, "Professor Dumbledore is a great wizard and Harry can only wish to be half as good as him. It is obvious that Harry is the secret weapon in this war and if Dumbledore has to do a little deception to push Harry to follow him then that is what he must do. It is not like Harry would not die for the greater good. Hell, he has been putting himself in needless dangers many times already."

Ginny's anger was starting to overflow as she yelled back, "Don't you get it. Harry is a person and I have no doubt that Harry would give his life up for those he loved just like I would willingly give up my life for those that I love. In Harry's case, each time those supposed needless dangers that he put himself through usually had both you and

Hermione associated with him and he was doing what he wanted to do at the time which was to protect those around him. Do you ever use that brain of yours? Think of the repercussions of every major action that Harry went through and what were the results. He did it for others and not for himself.”

Ron blurted out, “Yeah, just like last year right Ginny? You remember right, the Department of Mystery and the Veil of Death? You remember that? It was because of Harry that Sirius died!”

There were gasps at what Ron just said and even Ginny froze in her step and couldn’t believe that Ron actually said that. Tonks said to Ron, “That was out of line Ron. You know that it wasn’t Harry’s fault.”

After hearing what Ron said, Harry stood up, took hold of Ginny’s hand, and the two made to walk out of the room with Kayla, Remus, and Tonks following them. After Tonks made her statement, Harry said to Ron, “At least now, I know where I stand with you and what you truly believe. I know now that I should never have called you a best friend. You and Hermione have hurt me just as much as watching Sirius fall through the veil but you wouldn’t know anything about it. I know that it was my fault but thank you for confirming my suspicions about how you all felt about it.”

After Harry left, Ginny motioned for Kayla, Remus, and Tonks to follow him out and that she’ll be there shortly. She turned to Ron and said in a cold calm voice, “Haven’t you learned anything yet from these last few days? Did you not learn from watching Harry practice while he was at Potter Mansion that when Harry broke down was when he felt that he had betrayed his parents? Harry’s greatest fear and biggest doubt is trust. He is afraid of being betrayed and betraying others. Great job though Ron. You just alienated Harry from the rest of the Order for sure now. I just hope that you all are ready to pay the consequences for Ron’s stupid actions.”

Ginny left and went to find the group. They were in the drawing room with Harry just sitting there staring at the ground and the rest of them just looking uncomfortable at not knowing what to do and staring at Harry sympathetically. Ginny made her way to sit next to Harry and pulled him into a hug.

Ginny said, "It doesn't matter what they think Harry. Who cares what traitors think? They say whatever they can to try to get out of blame. There are only two people that has any right to worry about what happened to Sirius and that's Remus and you. I know that Remus does not blame you and I also know that it wasn't your fault."

Remus said, "Ginny's right Harry. I don't blame you for what happened and you're not at fault for what happened. Sirius died doing what he wanted and that was fighting Voldemort and making sure that you're safe. Remember what he told you about him being in your heart. Never forget that Harry."

Harry responded, "Thanks guys. I guess I need reminding now and then." He paused for a moment and said, "Remus, Tonks, why didn't you tell me what was going on?"

The two of them looked ashamed for a moment then Tonks said, "We knew that you already knew that you were being followed so that wasn't that big of a deal. As to Ron and Hermione, they were told to keep an eye on you which we thought was a good idea and they really weren't giving us any information that you couldn't get from anybody that was in Gryffindor. To tell you the truth, I get more headaches from the two of them than any useful information."

Remus said, "The two of us agreed that if it got serious then we would let you know what was going on. You know Harry after that little speech you gave the Order, there are a few more people that are more sympathetic to your side and willing to help you out if you want."

Harry nodded and said, "I didn't do that to try to take control of the Order. I did that to open up the eyes of its members to what was going on."

Ray popped into the room and said, "Harry Potter sir, there is something you should see in the kitchen. There are many people gathering as the Order has been called to a meeting."

Harry nodded while saying, "Thank you Ray. I'll be in there shortly."

The group went into the kitchen to find out what was going on. There were lots of movements and talking going on in the kitchen as more and more people showed up. Harry walked up to the kitchen table and saw a Daily Prophet on the table. He picked it up and read:

Announcement from the Minister of Magic

By Rita Skeeter

Minister Fudge, in a surprise move, has announced that he will be making an announcement concerning matters of magical creatures and new Ministry standards considering those creatures and an update on the war against You-Know-Who. The public forum is scheduled for today at 2 o'clock in Diagon Alley. Expected to be in attendance will be Albus Dumbledore. Ministry officials said that Harry Potter is unable to attend but extended his full cooperation with the Ministry. It is in the opinion of this reporter that the war so far has not been going well for the Ministry and wanted to use this chance to calm the public. There have been many attacks that have resulted in slow Ministry response and it doesn't look like it will improve anytime soon. I for one will be there and have faith in the Ministry considering the two beacons of the light, Albus Dumbledore will be there, and Harry Potter expressed his support.

Ginny asked, "What are you going to do Harry?"

Harry said, "I'm not sure, what do you think?"

The two of them didn't care that everybody else was trying to listen into what they were talking about. Ginny said, "I think that we should go to see what Fudge has to say. The idiot doesn't seem to learn his lesson unless he contacted you and you didn't let me know."

Harry smiled and replied, "Ginny, you know everything about me and haven't left my side for the last few days. I seriously doubt that I could hide something like this from you. Plus, I don't look forward to getting you mad and facing the Bat Bogey Hex."

Ginny returned the smile and gave him a peck on the cheek before she said, "Good, you're learning Mr. Potter. Let's go talk about this

somewhere else. We have a few hours to figure out what we're going to do."

Harry nodded and the two of them accompanied by Kayla left the room. Remus and Tonks stayed behind because Dumbledore called for a meeting of the Order to discuss matters concerning Fudge and his announcement. The trio went to Harry's room and talked for a while and much to the Order's annoyance did not consider asking the Order what they thought would be a good course of action even after Dumbledore sent Rain to ask Harry to come down and talk about what was going on or going to happen.

Two o'clock came around faster than expected. In front of Gringott's was a large platform with a podium in the middle. For the first time in months, Diagon Alley was filled with people and the security level taken was unprecedented with pairs of Aurors at every corner and above every store. Most of the people were waiting for the start of the public announcement as Fudge made his way towards the platform from behind the stage with Umbridge and Percy tagging along with a group of about ten Aurors escorting them. Dumbledore was coming through the entrance accompanied by Remus, Vance, Jones, Snape, and McGonagall. None of the Aurors that are part of the Order wanted to be part of Dumbledore's entourage because many of them would be fired if they did so and would hurt the cause.

The two groups reached the stage at about the same time and Dumbledore and Fudge exchanged pleasantries. The two groups stood on opposite sides of the stage as Fudge went to the podium with Dumbledore standing next to him. Fudge spoke into what was a muggle equivalent of a microphone and said, "Welcome everyone. Will everybody please gather closer to the stage and we will begin." The people gathered closer towards the stage and more people came from the stores. A few of the stores even closed as store owners and workers came out to listen to what the Minister of Magic had to say.

Fudge continued to say, "Thank you for coming out. I would first like to introduce a few people on stage. To my left is my Senior Undersecretary Dolores Umbridge and to my right is the Headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore. We are here to let the people know

that the ministry is here to help the people and to inform the public of our progress.”

After some applause, Fudge said, “It has come to light that if we don’t tighten our control on half breeds and other magical creatures that they will be tempted to join the side of You-Know-Who. The ministry has passed a few decrees concerning werewolves, centaurs, goblins, giants, and other minor breeds. Effective immediately all the creatures mentioned above will be required to register all of their movements with the ministry and unless specifically stated by the ministry they will not be permitted to leave the areas that are designated for them. If they were to leave without ministry approval than they will be sent to Azkaban for a minimum of ten days and a maximum of life sentence if it is believed that their violation of this decree is to harm wizards and witches.”

There was some light applause but not many people really cared much on that issue. As a matter of fact due to Harry’s campaign on informing the wizarding worlds about the affairs and concerns of other magical creatures, more wizards and witches have become sympathetic to their needs. It gained more momentum when rumors that Harry Potter was the man behind the educational push of the wizarding world. Since they were only rumors, nobody wanted to come out and take a stand publicly.

Fudge continued on to say, “We believe that this will lead to more stability in the Wizarding World based on many of my trusted advisors. As many people know there have been many attacks recently on Wizarding towns and families that were ordered by You-Know-Who. I am here to tell you not to worry and we are doing everything that we can to stop him. The ministry has been working around the clock protecting major cities and have been preparing for this for over a year now. We believe that You-Know-Who’s capabilities have been weakened with recent defenses of cities like York where many Deatheaters were either captured or killed. As you all may not know, Harry Potter was there to help the Ministry defend the city. I have spoken to him myself and he said that all of his support is behind the Ministry and our current plans of action.”

Fudge asked, “Are there any questions?”

There were many people yelling out questions but quieted when he pointed to a wizard in the front who said, “Where is Harry Potter? Why couldn’t he show up today?”

Fudge said, “Mr. Potter went home for the holidays to get some rest after a busy semester at Hogwarts. Mr. Potter said that he believes the Ministry is heading on the right path and when he believes that it is time, he will make an appearance.”

A wizard from somewhere in the crowd yelled out, “What are we supposed to do to protect ourselves?”

Fudge replied, “If you followed the pamphlet on simple charms to place on your house than you should be safe. Don’t worry about it; the Ministry will take care of everything else.”

There were three bursts of flames on the stage as Harry, Kayla, and Ginny were lowered onto the stage by Nightlight, Sunrise, and Sunset. There were either cheers from people who noticed that Harry arrived or awe from those that were quiet because they were distracted by the three phoenixes. Fudge was ecstatic. This was just what he needed, to have the Boy-Who-Lived to show up and give his support to the man which would pretty much guarantee his re-election and get him out of any hot water from all the criticisms his administration was getting.

Harry walked over to the podium flanked on both sides by Ginny and Kayla. The Minister backed away to let him talk. What nobody on the stage outside of the trio and Remus realized was that this boy had a big surprise and Remus was excited at what was going to happen.

Harry started off calmly but quickly let his emotion take over which was anger. He said, “Thank you Minister Fudge.” That was the end of calm and the anger was let loose here as he looked at the minister while standing next to the podium and yelled, “You are nothing more than a large piece of crap and don’t deserve to be the Minister of Magic. You have done nothing but lie and still continue to do so to this day. We have never met and talked about any of this because if we did, you would have known better than to associate me with

anything that has to do with the Ministry. I think that the current administration is nothing more than greedy little bastards that can't do anything unless it lines their pockets with gold first. I have repeatedly warned you of the return of Voldemort," there were many squints and shivers at hearing the name, "and the threat that he posed yet you did nothing but called me an attention seeking lunatic. I have always hated having attention brought on me but you forced my hand here with your lies and now I have to set the record straight."

Harry turned his attention to the people and with all of his emotions and conviction said, "I will tell you the truth of what has been going on. I warned Fudge about the return of Voldemort and even provided another witness besides me but what does he do. He brings Dementors with him and immediately kills the only other person to witness the return of Voldemort over two years ago. He refused to listen to what I said and tells everybody that I am a lunatic to discredit both me and Dumbledore. To make matters worse, his Undersecretary sends Dementors after me last year over the summer holidays and they tried to send me to prison for protecting myself. Umbridge and Fudge conspired last year to take control of Hogwarts by making Umbridge a teacher at the school and slowly giving her rights that rivaled that of the Headmaster. It culminated in one night at the end of the semester where Umbridge stripped the students of all privileges and threatened to use the Cruciatus Curse against me. She also tortured students when they tried to stand up to her and speak the truth. Considering that all of her powers came from the Ministry, it would lead me to believe that Fudge knew about all of this but decided to cover it up. I also never agreed to help the Ministry because I don't believe in working with such incompetent fools. If I had to depend on the Ministry to do anything, I'm better off just killing myself because the Ministry seems to only be good at making up stories or taking the credit for what others have done. That leads me to the battle at York a few weeks ago. I showed up to defend York because I wanted to protect the orphans and the orphanages. It became obvious to me and the citizens of York that it was up to us to protect the town because the Ministry was no where to be seen yet a kid hidden away in Hogwarts managed to do something about it. You all need to get rid of this man and elect a new minister that is competent, non-corrupt, and will defend the people not rich contributors to his campaign."

There were loud cheers from the people when Harry finished. There were also chants of 'out with Fudge' and a few 'Potter for Minister'. Fudge was caught off guard by the speech and made a hasty retreat knowing that his career was over followed by Percy and Umbridge. Many of the Order that accompanied Dumbledore had looks of approval but Dumbledore seemed a little disappointed. Ginny gave Harry a kiss on the cheek and a hug which was immediately followed by a hug from Kayla.

The cheering went on for a few more minutes when it died down a little and a lady yelled out, "What is your stance on the decrees on magical creatures that the Ministry just passed?"

Harry thought about it for a moment and said, "I think that it is ridiculous if the Ministry believe that passing those stupid laws will do any good. If anything it will do more harm. I have personal experience when it comes to being held to unjustified restraints due to the desires of those who shouldn't have rights over me. I spent over ten years of my life in a living hell which consisted of living in a cupboard under the stairs and being a slave to those that I lived with. That's part of why I know that it is wrong to impose the will of one group over another. There is no point in making enemies when we know that we can live and co-exist with each other in peace. Look at our relationships with the Goblins. Why try to start something when all we have to do is treat them with respect and they in turn will more than likely respect us which won't result in anymore wars between wizards and goblins. That's what I want to say. We have to learn to co-exist and share with each other. To make friends with a centaur means you have a friend in the forest and they have a friend when they leave the forest. We need to embrace them as friends and treat each other with respect. Therefore, I call upon each and every one of you to pressure your Ministry officials to repeal those laws that were recently passed and all other prejudicial laws. We must learn to understand each other and get rid of ignorance because it is through ignorance that we develop fears and through fears prejudices form. In time prejudice will develop into discrimination which will result in hate. We can stop that from the beginning by learning about each other."

There were lots of clapping and a few cheers as many people nodded their agreements. Another lady asked, "Are the rumors true? There are rumors going on about you starting educational and public information programs to help people understand each other and different magical societies better."

Harry nodded and said, "It is true but I did not want to be associated with these programs at first because I wanted the people to make the decisions themselves and not because of somebody's popularity. If we study the facts to both sides of a problem then we will make a more informative decision."

There was a wizard in the crowd that asked, "What do you think we can do against You-Know-Who?"

Harry said, "There are some good things in those pamphlets the ministry gave out but you can do more and I mean much more. Everybody can brush up on their defense skills and practice some charms and transfiguration while they are at it. Go to the library or a book store and find some references that can help you. I also advise on having a few escape plans in case you were to be attacked at home or out in the streets. It is always good to be prepared but don't forget to live your lives. Voldemort has already won if you let him dictate your lives by hiding in your houses and living in fear. There are many more of us and too few Deatheaters to do anything. For example, if the people here at Diagon Alley were to rise up together and fight the Deatheaters then they will lose for sure. I'm not going to paint a pretty picture because there will be casualties and if you fight than there is a better chance that you will die."

Another wizard asked, "What gives you the right to say something like that? You don't have a family to take care of."

Harry replied, "You are right. I don't have what many would be considered a family left because I lost all of them in the fight against Voldemort. I lost my parents when I was one because they were there to protect me just so I can live one second longer. That one second turned out to be years. I lost my godfather Sirius Black, because he came to rescue me in the Ministry of Magic last year and was killed by Bellatrix Lestrange. I do have somebody that I would die

for and love more than life itself and I know that each one of you out there knows what I am talking about. It can be a wife or husband, a boyfriend or girlfriend, a child, a parent, a niece or nephew, a friend, and even for some people their pet. There are many of you out there that I don't know but I have no problems dying if it meant that I can take Voldemort with me."

A witch asked, "Why did Sirius Black come to help you? I thought that he was trying to kill you and betrayed your parents."

Harry shook his head and said, "Sirius Black was not the Potter Family secret keeper. The secret keeper was changed shortly before my parents were betrayed and it was changed to Peter Pettigrew. Pettigrew was the one that betrayed my parents and he is still alive. Sirius Black was an innocent man sent to Azkaban without a trial which is another reason why I despise the Ministry of Magic. We must clean up the ministry so no more innocent people are sent there while those who we know are guilty get out like Malfoy, Nott, Parkinson, McNair, Crabbe, and Goyle."

Another wizard asked, "Why do you use You-Know-Who's name like it is nothing?"

Harry said, "To me that name is nothing. I am not going to be afraid of a person's name. Besides Lord Voldemort's real name is Tom Marvolo Riddle." Harry showed them how the name was an anagram. He continued on saying, "His biggest secret is that although he claims to be a pureblood he really is a half blood. His father was a muggle that abandoned him which made him angry. Tom grew up in a life filled with hate and was continually sent to people that abused him. He grew to hate and only knew hate which is why he became so evil. His past is filled with sorrow but the only way to finish it is to kill him because he is beyond saving. He is pure evil now especially with all the rituals he has gone through."

There was a pause as more questions were being yelled out begging to be answered, but Harry raised his hands to calm the people down. He said, "That is all the questions I will answer today for I have to go but I want to leave you with a few thoughts. First off, we must teach ourselves and always try to see a situation from all sides of a puzzle.

We must treat everybody with respect and care. The results may not be felt immediately but will change people down the road. Always stand up for what you believe in but respect the wishes of others. Stand up for those who can't defend themselves because you know that there is always somebody out there to help you if you need it. Work together with your family and friends and clean up corruption around you. Together we can stand and protect each other. To prove a point to Tom, everybody should celebrate tonight but be on guard to send the message to Voldemort that we will not go down without a fight. We will stand to the last man, woman, or child and we will win when it is all over."

The crowds cheered and were celebrating in the streets when Harry was done. There were people talking about going to the bookstore and getting what they needed to understand things they didn't know. Others were talking about going to go play tomorrow while many talked about cleaning up their towns and the ministry. Everybody agreed on one thing which was they were going to bring the Deatheaters hell and Voldemort was going to pay for what he had done to the Wizarding World.

As Harry finished the three phoenixes came down from their positions above the crowd and lowered their tail feathers to Harry, Kayla, and Ginny. With three bursts of flames from the respective phoenixes the three teenagers were gone and more cheers erupted with many people yelling, 'Potter' and 'Justice'.

Harry was tired from using so much emotion in his speech and everything went as planned. Ginny was proud of Harry and couldn't even be pried off of Harry because she was hugging him and repeatedly kissing him. Kayla was also proud of him and went to send word to her mom by owl to let her know what had happened. The three knew what was going to be the headline of the Daily Prophet and every major newspaper across Europe tomorrow and hoped that it would be enough to mobilize the people to rise up and take a stand.

The Order was at a loss of words. They left shortly after Harry left and called for an emergency meeting to discuss what had just gone on. In less than an hour, Harry Potter managed to do what for over a year the Order had failed to do. The people were listening to him and

didn't know where to go from there. The general consequences were that the good side won out big today and that Harry was playing for keeps now. Many of them had a new found respect for the teenager while others like Dumbledore, McGonagall, Hermione, and the Weasleys weren't sure if this was going to turn out well because the wizarding world was now being lead unofficially by an angry teenage boy.

Harry took a short nap and spent the rest of the day training with Ginny and Kayla down in Ginny's trunk. Kayla was caught off guard at how strong Ginny had become which immediately reminded her that Ginny was now Harry's equivalent. The three of them was definitely a force to be reckoned with and if anybody wanted to pick a fight with them will have both a difficult time surviving both with their lives and socially due to their new status in society as the new Golden Trio. The question to most people outside of the Order was where Ron and Hermione were in all of this.

The next morning, The Daily Prophet had pictures of the celebrations that were going on in the streets and pages of what Harry had said. There was also a call for Fudge to step down as minister and for reform. This angered Voldemort; and many of his followers paid dearly that evening into the night with most of them barely able to walk the next day. Corrupt officials and suspected Deatheaters were now afraid of being caught in the streets and being persecuted in public.

Chapter 27

Reform

Over the next few days and into the first week of school there was widespread reform going on throughout England which started to spill over to other European countries. Many of the discriminatory laws on magical beings were lifted and many public officials were removed from office. Day after day the Daily Prophet was printing about officials who were removed and who were placed in their spots or who were running for those spots. There was also many calls for Harry to endorse one person over another but he repeatedly declined because he wasn't informed enough to make a recommendation. Major newspaper companies like the Daily Prophet and the newly respected Quibbler were running articles on suspected Deatheaters and confirmed Deatheaters in a wanted dead or alive section of the newspaper.

There were many newly inaugurated Deatheaters that were captured but the smarter ones and higher ranking ones managed to evade capture by hiding out at their own headquarters or placing their houses under unplotable charms to protect themselves and their families. There were cries for public hangings to teach the Deatheaters what was going to happen to them when they were captured but Harry and Dumbledore managed to convince the people that a fair trial for all must be ensured and to sentence people to Azkaban if necessary but to publicly execute somebody was out of the question although they did stop short of saying publicly executing members of the inner circle and Voldemort was acceptable.

Both Harry and Dumbledore agreed that teaching the higher ranking Deatheaters a lesson will strike fear in the rest of the ranks especially if the most fanatical one of them all, Bellatrix, were to be punished in public. They also knew that killing Voldemort in public or at least where enough people could see and spread the news would be needed to happen in order for the people to believe that Voldemort was finally gone. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla were still not on good terms along with Dumbledore and most of the Order. Those members of the Order thought to be sympathetic to Harry were excluded from high priority missions and privileged information. This outraged Harry but

decided to let it be because the Order was a volunteer organization and he had no say in its affairs.

During the train ride back to Hogwarts, Ron and Hermione's group sat in a different train compartment than Harry and his group. Word spread quickly about the split between what seemed like friends that would never turn on each other and doubt started to rise amongst the students. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla became inseparable and trained hard every free time that they had. This resulted in greater benefits for Kayla because after Harry and Ginny's ritual over the winter break, she became the weakest of the fighters. Kayla was learning extremely fast with two teachers and Ginny was developing what she had learned from Harry at an accelerated pace. Because Harry and Ginny were well beyond NEWT level in their knowledge and practical abilities they were able to finish their assignments quickly and helped Kayla finish hers faster.

Harry decided to show some of what he was able to do in class by demonstrating it mentally and practically. He became the first one to finish all of his assignments with perfection and managed to do every single practical assignment and demonstration with absolute beauty and speed like when he conjured a new elaborate desk that had intricate carvings as the trim. The desk had secure storage space and designed for comfort. Harry's display of abilities quickly made Hermione upset because she was no longer the number one student in the class. This resulted in Hermione working twice as hard but still could not accomplish anything close to what Harry managed to do. Ron on the other hand was mad that he was being left behind. Due to Hermione's need to catch up to Harry, Ron had nobody to watch over him in his studies and he started to slip. He was envious of Harry that everything came so easy for him but what Ron didn't know was that Harry had worked hard to achieve this level of magic.

Kayla was watching on with amusement at the reactions that Hermione and Ron were giving to Harry's new level of work. Because of Kayla's personal training from both Harry and Ginny, she was an extremely close third place in the year and that was mainly due to Kayla not spending nearly as much time as Hermione in the library. Kayla's dedication to her work with Harry and Ginny was unquestioned as she placed all her trust in the two for not leading her

wrong. Harry and Alexia did become closer as they exchanged letters which came to about one letter a week due to the long travel the owls had to make. This did make Hedwig a little happier because she was getting more work than before and was getting pretty bored sitting up in the towers with the other owls all day and doing nothing because Harry didn't write letters to anyone during the school year except to Anna.

Anna and Anthony had a nice school break and spent it together at the orphanage. The two of them received some toys and money from Harry to spend on what ever they wanted because all of their needs were taken care of. Anna became a leader quickly after her talk with Harry during his first visit and was usually the first one to comfort new orphans and welcome visitors. Anthony was more than grateful to Harry for helping his sister go through so much and the three of them agreed that they would share a brother and sister relationship. Anna and Anthony also knew that if they needed anything then to come to Harry who was more than happy to help.

Ginny followed in Harry's footsteps when it came to class so she could spend more time with Harry and Kayla. At first she was a little jealous of always having to share her time with Harry with Kayla so Harry decided to spend every other night just the two of them walking together and talking around the castle. Ginny's level of work in her class left her bored most of the time which later resulted in her helping the professors teaching the classes. Ginny's tutoring in class elevated the levels of Gryffindors in school and the Ravenclaws felt threatened because they were supposed to be the smart ones and now the four smartest people in school belonged to Gryffindor.

Many rich wizarding families found out about Harry's generosity to those less fortunate and started to give more to public programs and founded foundations to help in the causes that they related to the most. Many new libraries were in the planning stages of being built or older libraries were being expanded to accommodate the demands of the people. More books were being published with special emphasis on Defense, Charms, Transfiguration, Sociology, and History. There was a burst of new charities to help take care of families that lived in poverty and educational programs to inform the public. There were now public forums held all over England every single night to discuss

and debate issues of society and law so that elected officials but more importantly the people, would be more informed.

Voldemort tried to suppress this new idealistic society in England by launching a few attacks on random towns throughout England and in other parts of Europe but they were defeated each time. There were many casualties on both sides and Voldemort knew that he had to be more precise in his attacks from now on because he could not afford to trade a wizard's life for another wizard's life because he would not have enough men to last the month. There was also an increase in threats and violence for those families that refused Voldemort's recruiting but towns banded together to help the threatened families. The question now became how long this mentality will last because if Harry was to fall or became corrupt then all the work that wizards have done so far will be for nothing.

About a week and a half after school started, Dumbledore sent a message to Harry to meet him after dinner in his office and to bring Ginny and Kayla along if he wanted. Dumbledore knew that it was now useless to keep the two witches away because Harry was now on a run where he was telling the ladies everything anyway. He wanted to get on his good side now given his new level of popularity. When the trio made it to the office they found that they were not going to be alone with Dumbledore as Snape, McGonagall, Hermione, Ron, Remus, Tonks, and Moody were there.

Upon their arrival Dumbledore motioned for them to take a few seats around the table. The trio sat together at one side of the room away from everybody. Dumbledore asked, "Harry, I'm sure you're wondering why I asked you to come tonight."

Harry nodded and said, "Yes sir, I'm not aware of any business that would concern the two of us."

Snape wanted to say something but was silenced by a look from Dumbledore. Dumbledore said, "I would like for us to come to a truce of some sort. We would like you to reconsider joining the Order of the Phoenix."

Harry shook his head and asked, "Why are you all so insistent that I join the Order?"

Dumbledore replied, "In a matter of speaking, we need to be on the same page. It will do better if we worked together to defeat Voldemort and his followers. The Order has always been in charge of this fight and will always continue to fight evil."

Harry replied, "As you all know I am not privy to any information concerning what the Order does and for the most part I don't really care. Right now, as far as I can tell, Ginny, Kayla, and I have managed to accomplish more than what the Order has done for some time. The people of England are educating themselves about rumors and things they have questions about and defending their families and friends from threats. What benefit would I have to join the Order?"

Dumbledore replied, "The Order believes that we can do more as a group meaning both you and me if we worked together. Right now the people are organizing by themselves from town to town and there is no coordination between towns. Newly elected officials are not familiar with what their job requires because so many of them are being elected at the same time. If we don't address these concerns then anarchy can break out given something happens to you or me."

Harry replied, "I have no cause for now to stand in the way of what they do. The people of Britain can take care of themselves. I will place my trust in the people to learn from their mistakes and grow from there. There is no purpose to lead everybody by holding their hands or else they will always come back and ask for more advice when anything happens. If the Order wishes to organize the leadership across Britain than it is up to you all but at this time it does not concern me."

Dumbledore replied, "If you were to side with us and join us then it would give us more credibility in the Wizarding World. The people are looking to you for advice and will follow you without question."

Ginny replied for Harry, "So you want to use him as a tool again. Do you all not get it that Harry wants wizards and witches to think for

themselves for once and not rely on the popularity of one or two individuals? What do you think will happen when somebody with no intention of doing good becomes influential? An example of that would be Malfoy. Just think of how much influence he has had over the ministry over the last fifteen years."

McGonagall said, "Miss Weasley, you will address the Headmaster with the respect he deserves."

Dumbledore stepped in to calm McGonagall, and then said, "I believe that Mr. Potter knows better than anybody just how fickle people can be. If anything happens to Harry then we really have no idea how the people will react to a scandal or Mr. Potter's death."

Kayla said, "Harry should not be the one to carry the weight of the world. In all honesty, I don't understand how it is that he is still listening to all the crap with wizarding kind. Ever since he was brought back into the wizarding world, he has been forced to save this and save that, help this and help that, be a hero one moment and the villain the next. If I was him, I would have left this world long ago and let you all sort out the mess that you all created."

Harry said, "That is an interesting idea Kayla." He continued to have a thoughtful look as he contemplated how the magical world has always treated him like a tool.

Snape found his opportunity to get rid of Harry and said, "It's not like we really care Potter. As far as I am concerned, you can leave the magical world and stay away. At least I know that my life will be much easier with you gone."

Harry turned to Snape and said, "You know Snape, if I didn't know any better, I'd say you are jealous of a teenager. Not just any teenager but a teenager that can bring you more hell then you had in your years as a Hogwarts student."

Dumbledore interrupted and said, "Harry, there is no need to provoke Professor Snape. You have made it abundantly clear what you demand respect from Professor Snape when outside of school and you must show him respect while at school."

Harry replied, "I only respect those that respect me."

Dumbledore sighed and said, "We are getting off the subject of why we're here in the first place."

Harry nodded and said, "I agree Professor. I will neither join the Order nor will I participate in anything that the Order plans to do unless I or my friends have an interest in them. Although we did get off the subject, I did learn that the Order in general still has not listened to what I've told them weeks ago and still only sees me as a tool. I think it is time for me and my friends to go now. Goodnight Professor."

Harry didn't wait for a response as the trio went to leave the office. They were interrupted by McGonagall saying, "Mr. Potter that will be ten points off Gryffindor for disrespect and a detention to be served with me tomorrow night for disrespecting the Headmaster."

Harry stopped and replied, "I'll be there Professor." The trio left the office and Harry called for a meeting of the DA. Dumbledore, McGonagall, Hermione, and Ron were still in the office when they felt the watches heat up. They looked at their watches and noticed a special message that said, 'Special DA meeting at 7 o'clock tonight and everybody must attend.'

Dumbledore was the first to react. He said, "It looks like Mr. Potter was not too happy at what happened in here just now. I wouldn't be surprised if there is going to be some big news tonight. Miss Granger and Mr. Weasley, please make sure to be at the meeting and report after the meeting about what happened."

The two teenagers nodded and said, "Yes sir," just before they left to get ready for the meeting.

The new trio went directly for the Room of Requirement after they left Dumbledore's office and talked about what just happened. They decided to do some quick planning and called a meeting to send another message to the Order and to set the battle lines for this civil war that they are about to start at school.

In the room of requirement, Harry asked the room for a platform and booths in the back of the room. That resembled voting booths with a box and ballots inside of them. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla were standing on the stage whispering to each other as students made their way into the room. The room also had plenty of comfortable chairs and sofas for people to use that were all facing the stage. It did not take long for everybody to arrive with Ron, Hermione, Luna, and Neville near the center of the room. After doing a quick scan of the room to make sure that everybody was there Harry stood up and said, "I'm sure you all are wondering why I called this meeting on such short notice but I've learned some interesting information tonight and decided to do something about it."

There were more confused faces from everybody gathered as they were whispering about what could have happened since dinner until now to make Harry call a meeting. Harry said, "It is not a big secret that Dumbledore and I are not getting along and we have our own views on how certain things should be handled. You all know that in the past I would follow Dumbledore anywhere but that has changed a great deal ever since the end of last year. After learning the truth tonight that Dumbledore only sees me as a tool for him to get what he wants, I am now firm in my belief that he has been in power for too long and don't know what is good for the people anymore. He only sees each of us as pieces on a chessboard that are expendable and just as long as we kill the other person's king then all is good."

Hermione stood up and indignantly said, "What are you trying to do Harry? Are you trying to have a coup at the school?"

Harry shook his head and said, "No Miss Granger. I do not intent to take over the school or to oust Dumbledore but I intend to make sure that I am ready to protect myself and this school when the time comes considering him and his band of followers have failed to do anything productive so far."

Hermione and Ron took offense to what he just said and wanted to say something but were cut short when Ginny stood up by Harry and said, "I have seen what it is like for Harry ever since Dumbledore felt like messing with Harry's life and all it has caused him was misery. Harry, Kayla, and I have agreed that Dumbledore has spies working

around us to keep tabs on each one of us and we don't like it. Therefore, we want to know who each of you are aligned with. It is time to find out if you side with Dumbledore, the Ministry, or Harry. In the back of the room are voting booths for you to cast your allegiance in secrecy. If you choose to side with the Ministry or Dumbledore then the charms placed on your watch will be null and void. You will also be free from the secrecy of the DA for the DA will not exist anymore after today. If you side with Harry then a new secrecy charm will be placed on the watch that kicks in if you betray the group or its members then you will suffer severe consequences if you do."

Harry took over for her and said, "I failed to take into consideration last time about the parchment that you all signed that sealed you to secrecy that you could still talk about when and where the meetings were. This time this has been taken care of and everything about the group will be done in secret. You can publicly state your allegiance but this is done to protect those who don't want to be singled out. If you side with Dumbledore then feel free to talk to Ron or Hermione about future training and if you side with the Ministry then you are on your own. Remember that siding with me and then betraying me this time will not go unpunished. Are there any questions?"

Susan Bones stood up and asked, "What went on between you and Ron and Hermione? The three of you used to be inseparable but now you seem to hate them."

Harry replied, "That is of a personal nature but I don't mind explaining because this will clear up many of the questions that you all will have. I learned over the Christmas break that Mr. Weasley and Miss Granger have been spying on me and reporting my actions to Dumbledore for over a year now. In fact they have been doing this since the beginning of the last school year. Dumbledore likes to play these mind games and the two of them sided with him against me so I have decided to fight back. This means me going against Dumbledore and the two traitors Mr. Weasley and Miss Granger."

Everybody glared at Ron and Hermione. Nobody could believe that the two of them would betray their once best friend. Ron and Hermione became uncomfortable very quickly and Luna and Neville were happy they were not singled out like Ron and Hermione. They

were also glad that they moved out of Harry's suite of rooms. Ron and Hermione stayed due to the urgings from Dumbledore.

Michael Corner asked, "If we were not to side with you will you still train us?"

Harry replied, "I will only be training those that I know I can trust. In other words, no I will not be helping those that don't side with me but that applies to Defensive training not things related to school like your assignments for class. If somebody gets an idea to ask a teacher to assign something so that I will have to train you then I will stop extra training for all those outside of my new group."

Cho asked, "Why are you taking such a hard stand against Dumbledore? It just seems like he is just trying to look out for you."

Harry replied, "There is a difference between helping someone and manipulating somebody. That is a long story and I don't wish to retell it. I don't plan on alienating anybody who does not side with me nor agrees with what I am saying. I need to do this so I can know who I can trust and who I can't when a conflict of issues come up or who I can go to for help. I don't claim to be the best person to follow because I have made many mistakes in my life and people have paid dearly for it. The difference now is that I am now ready to face those challenges with both eyes open instead of blindly following."

Ginny asked, "Are there anymore questions?"

Nobody said anything but a few people looked around the group. After a few moments of waiting for someone to voice a question Harry said, "Alright, will everybody please line up in a few rows to cast your votes. When you are finished doing that then you can leave if you wish or you can stay if you like. I'll be here till the last ballot is cast so if anybody wanted to talk to me, Ginny, or Kayla, we will be here to answer them."

The students lined up and many of them couldn't believe that they were doing this. They now had to choose sides in this fight but at least Harry had given them fair warning to think about which side they would choose if they were forced to make a decision. Harry didn't

want to force the students to do this but this was the only way he could think of getting rid of those that he could not trust.

Everyone cast their votes but nobody left afterwards. They just hung around and talked with each other with a few people talking to Harry, Ginny, and Kayla about various things like what they will cover in future practices. These people were outwardly vocal about their support for Harry. Hermione, Ron, Neville, and Luna stayed huddled together in the back of the room.

When everything ended, Harry gave a wave of his wand as three parchments appeared on the table in front of him on the stage. Everybody was looking at him for an explanation of what he was doing. Harry said, "Here are three parchments with the names of people who sided with which group. The first parchment is with names for Dumbledore. The second is for the ministry and the last one is for me."

Harry pointed his wand at the one for the ministry and burned it. He then pointed his wand at the one for Dumbledore and burned it. Harry gave the third parchment to Ginny to hold for him for the moment. Harry said, "If you did not choose to follow me then I don't really care which person you did choose. If Dumbledore or the Ministry wanted to find out who is loyal to them then they can go find out for themselves because I'm not here to do that work for them because I know for sure that they would not make it easy for me."

When Ginny took the parchment, she was joined by Kayla who took a look at the list. The turn out for those who sided with Harry was more than expected. As a matter of fact, almost everybody signed the list and the only key people who didn't were Ron, Hermione, Neville, and Luna. After Ginny and Kayla gave each other a knowing look, Ginny whispered to Harry, "Almost everybody has sided with you and you get one guess at who didn't."

Harry sighed and went over to look at the list. Harry said, "I'm not sure if I should be happy about this or not. I am honored that they trust me but the question becomes can I lead them in a war with more than one enemy."

Ginny and Kayla gave Harry a sympathetic nod. Harry turned back to everybody that was gathered and Harry said, "The new roster for the new DA has been set and we will not be taking on any new members. I will inform those on this list when we will meet again by use of the watches. Those who did not side with me can keep the watches as a gift for your dedication to the DA in the past and I hope that this does not spoil our friendship."

Everybody left the room with Ron and Hermione rushing back to the Headmaster's office to inform him about what happened. Ginny, Harry, and Kayla stayed in the room to discuss what changes they would have to do as the newly formed DA. Dumbledore did not like the news of Harry breaking off all students that were not loyal to him but understood that he had serious trust issues at the moment considering those that he considered just as close as family has turned their backs on him. The Order members at Hogwarts minus Remus and Tonks were assembled to discuss the recent events but more importantly what to do to get Harry back under their control again.

The next day, Harry went to McGonagall's office for detention. When he showed up she said, "Potter, for detention today you will be writing at least a parchment length on why you will not listen to Professor Dumbledore anymore."

Harry responded, "I've already told you all why and I wasn't holding back either so there really is no point in it for me to write it down."

She said, "You may feel that it is necessary but you need to write down what you are thinking so you can see why you are wrong. Professor Dumbledore has always been on your side and helped you all this time but you turn your back on him."

Harry kept his cool when he said, "I have thought about it for some time now and I really did not want to believe that the Professor has abandoned me in the past and used me to his own ends but now I've learned that it is the truth when I continually reevaluated everything he has done concerning me. Sure there are a few times that I am grateful that he intervened but I must ask myself 'Why is it that I am treated so differently from everyone else?'"

McGonagall said, "I just hope you know what you are doing Potter. Just because he has made some mistakes does not mean that he can not be forgiven. You have made mistakes in the past and he has forgiven you."

Harry nodded and said, "Many of the mistakes I have made are due mainly to information being withheld from me or in the interest of others. The ghosts of my past continue to haunt me and I will always pay for my mistakes. What makes my mistakes different from Professor Dumbledore is that I am not trying to manipulate people into doing what I want. I let the people around me make their own decisions. I have repeatedly asked him why it was that Voldemort was after me but he lied to me until the night after Sirius died. I also told him that the Dursleys neglected me but he always sent me back there claiming that my blood protection would protect me but that didn't help out very much did it. To tell you the truth, there is little difference between me and Tom Riddle. We were both orphans and continued to be sent to people that only treated us with hate. In all honesty, Dumbledore had a chance to save Riddle but failed to do it because he did not want to face the truth of a child being neglected and beaten. In my case I think that Dumbledore is hoping that I turn out to be the opposite of Riddle that way he can excuse his actions of sending a child to people who hate them. I have given the Professor many chances to fix his mistakes ever since I started Hogwarts but he continues to make the same decisions which put me at harm more than anything. Dumbledore refuses to admit that a child being harmed emotionally is just as bad as being harmed physically. What he doesn't seem to realize is that physical wounds heal with time but mental wounds live forever and haunt the soul. I have broken so many bones and been injured so many times physically that I can not count them all anymore but the few mental scars that have been a result of my mistakes like Sirius and Cedric's death or memories of being beaten and thrown into a cupboard below the stairs to starve for days live with me every single day."

McGonagall realized that Harry was scarred way beyond what any child should be and was mentally berating herself for not doing anything earlier. She was going to have a talk to Dumbledore about

this later on. She said, "What would it take for us to get our relationship back to the way it was before what happened last year?"

Harry shook his head and said, "I honestly don't know anymore. I have given those around me many chances to fix their mistakes and now I'm just tired of being the sacrificial lamb and the scapegoat. I will no longer be anybody's tool to be used at anybody's will. Right now, I don't think that my relationship with the members of the Order will return to anything resembling the first time I met the Order."

McGonagall sighed and said, "That will be all Potter. You have told me what I needed to know. Go back to your dormitory."

Harry said, "Goodnight Professor." He left her contemplating about what he just said and he went back to the dormitories to spend the rest of the night with Ginny in her trunk. Kayla was spending her time working on her school work. Harry told Ginny everything and contemplated on what was going to happen between him and the Order. After talking about it for a while, they decided to not talk about business anymore and just have a nice night together which they needed with everything that has happened lately. Harry spent the night innocently sleeping with Ginny in her room. The two of them had a smile when they went to sleep because for that moment the rest of the world did not exist. It was just the two of them in peace.

A/N: I know many people didn't want Harry and Ginny to return to Hogwarts but it's so much more fun to bring the trio back to Hogwarts so they can walk all over the Order even more. To those who had questions about when I will update, I'll be updating somewhere from 2 to 3 chapters a week. I am a few chapters ahead but the buffer allows me to make corrections to make the story flow better or change it when I get a recommendation that will work better in the story later on. Thank you to my reviewers and keep it up.

Chapter 28

Umbridge's Revenge

A few days later Harry, Ginny, and Kayla, who recently started to join the couple's morning workout sessions, came to breakfast later than usual. The Great Hall was noisy and the words for and against Fudge and Umbridge could be heard over and over again. When they finally made it to their seat and were starting their breakfast Hedwig came flying in with a copy of the Daily Prophet.

Harry took the newspaper from her and said "That's awkward. Hedwig knows that I hate the Prophet. I wonder why she brought me the paper."

Ginny had taken the paper from Harry and was reading it. Harry could tell that she went from calm to angry when reading the paper so she handed it to Harry to read. The Daily Prophet said:

Fudge Resigns as Minister

By Rita Skeeter

Former Minister of Magic Cornelius Fudge has resigned as Minister of Magic late yesterday afternoon at the end of the business day. This is not a surprise move by Fudge for he was under enormous public pressure to resign and if he failed to resign by the end of this week then more than likely he would have been removed by a Vote of No Confidence that was going to be called upon by Madame Amelia Bones in charge of the Department of Law Enforcement.

Madame Bones was quoted saying, "Minister Fudge has tied the hands of Aurors for too long and it was time that we stood up to him. If we continue to stand by and let this man continue to lead than we are all signing our death warrants." The vast majority of heads of departments in the Ministry of Magic has agreed to what Madame Bones was saying. By resigning from the office of Minister of Magic, Fudge will not face charges of conspiracy against the wizards and witches of England concerning the cover up with You-Know-Who and slander against Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore.

The problem that is caused with Fudge's resignation is that his Head Undersecretary Dolores Umbridge becomes acting Minister or in this case Mistress of Magic until a new one is elected. If the wizarding community were to hastily elect an official then it would take at least one week to carry this out because of election laws requiring one week be given for people to decide and hear the candidates' platforms.

Umbridge has always taken a non diplomatic approach and drawn a hard line against those that stand against her. We at the Daily Prophet suspect that she will be going after Harry Potter while she is in office to discredit him like she did last year. On a bright note, the two leading candidates for Minister of Magic are Amelia Bones who is taking a hard line approach similar to Harry Potter's approach to Death Eaters and Arthur Weasley who is an out spoken supporter for Albus Dumbledore. It is safe to assume that who ever Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore support will win this election by a vast majority of the vote.

Harry was angry that Umbridge became the new minister even if it is for a short time. She would try to undo everything that Harry had accomplished over the last few weeks just because she wanted to see both him and other magical creatures suffer. A few people were looking to Harry to see how he was going to react but he managed to keep a calm outward appearance.

Ginny asked "Harry, what are you going to do?"

Harry responded "I'm not sure yet. I really don't want to have to endorse a candidate but I feel like I will be letting down two very good candidates if I did do that. I think that both your dad and Madame Bones will do a good job if elected."

Ginny said "I guess I'm not sure what to do either, it's really a big conflict of interest I guess."

Harry nodded and said, "I know what you mean. It's just that I know that your dad will do a good job. The question is will he be a puppet for Dumbledore to pull all the strings from behind the scenes. On the

other hand, I don't really know Madame Bones' stance on many things so I don't know if I can choose between the two."

Kayla nodded and said "I agree that they will do a good job but what about if Umbridge comes after you and finds something horrible about you or just makes it up."

Harry said, "There's not much I can do about her but respond to her accusations. Although I have a feeling that this will not be an easy week at the minimum, if she does manage to do something like get me taken out of Hogwarts or worse place me in Azkaban for what ever reason, I need the two of you to stick together."

Ginny said "I hope that nothing happens but I think that you're right. She is going to come after you as quickly as she can and as harsh as she can. What are we going to do though if you aren't here?"

Harry said "I guess just continue on as normal. Those things that I gave you over Christmas can not be taken away unless freely given away so don't worry. I'll have some protection with me at all times. I wouldn't put it past that toad to send me to Azkaban on some kind of charge even if it is just for a few days."

As the two were talking, Kayla noticed that the crowd was getting quieter and staring at the doors to the Great Hall. She poked at Harry and Ginny who also turned to look and once they saw what was coming they knew that the fireworks were about to begin. Umbridge was making her way down the Gryffindor Table towards Harry followed by approximately ten Aurors none of which Harry knew.

Once they made it to Harry they stopped and Umbridge with an air of superiority said "Harry Potter, you are under arrest for use of an Unforgivable Curse at the Ministry of Magic last year on one Bellatrix Lestrange. You are also charged with aiding an attack on Ministry officials last year with the help of centaurs from the Forbidden Forest."

Harry, Kayla, and Ginny jumped up with a sudden quickness that caught everybody off guard and drew their wands from their pockets. Harry and Ginny didn't want to use the rose wands unless necessary

to keep attention away from their second wands. The ministry officials in turn pulled out their wands and Umbridge said “How dare you draw your wands at us. What do you three think you can do against eleven highly trained ministry officials?”

Dumbledore was making his way down from the Head Table when all of this was going on accompanied by the staff members and with a voice of authority asked “What is going on over here Ms. Umbridge?”

Umbridge turned to Dumbledore and said “That’s Mistress of Magic Umbridge to you Dumbledore. You will give me the respect that I deserve. I am here to arrest Mr. Potter. This is a ministry matter so stay out of this.”

Dumbledore said “Mr. Potter is a student at this school therefore it does become my concern. It is also a concern to Professor McGonagall for she is his Head of House and Professor Lupin for he is Mr. Potter’s legal guardian.”

Umbridge said, “The ministry has higher authority than the school so what I say will go. As to Mr. Lupin, he is no longer Mr. Potter’s guardian for I decreed prior to coming here that no half breeds or non wizard or witch is allowed to maintain custody over a minor.”

Harry replied “You can’t do that. Professor Lupin is my rightful guardian and those discriminatory laws have been repealed already. You are not going to take this away from the both of us.”

Umbridge said “I don’t care what you want. As the Mistress of Magic, I have the power to temporarily suspend wizarding law in the event that concerns the security of the magical community. Mr. Potter, you are a threat to this community with your propaganda of treating those inferior to us as equals and as such I have to take full control of the situation. I will return the wizarding community back to the way we were which is tight control over everything.”

Harry was getting very aggravated and his raw power was starting to seep out of him. Everybody within one hundred feet could feel the intense magic and pulled back a little with Dumbledore and Ginny being the only ones not to flinch. Harry said “How do you expect to

take me if I don't want to come? Do you honestly expect to be able to take me with ten Aurors and your pathetic abilities?"

Umbridge lost her temper and said "If you will not come peacefully then we will take you by force. Unless anybody else here wants to share a prison cell with Mr. Potter then you all better back away. If I have to, I will fire the entire staff of Hogwarts and appoint those who are better qualified to teach the students."

Harry replied "I will rip your limbs off your body piece by piece if you dare try to harm anybody in this school!"

Umbridge said "You can add threatening a ministry official to your list of charges now. Aurors, take Mr. Potter into custody!"

Harry gave a quick look at the Aurors that accompanied Umbridge and all of them hesitated when they met his eye. Harry said "Do you all really want to follow such an arrogant, discriminating, bitch that will do anything to discredit those that she has a personal vendetta with?"

The lead Auror of the group said "She is the Mistress of Magic and by law we are required to carry out her orders. You are to come with us Mr. Potter and we ask that you come peacefully."

Harry gave the Auror a look of contempt and the Auror flinched. The Auror slowly and hesitantly approached Harry. Harry asked "Do you all think that you can take me in a duel?"

The head Auror said "I don't believe that I would make it out of a duel with you if it was just between the two of us but up against ten highly trained Aurors I think that we have the advantage but I don't want to take that chance. I may not like what it is that I have to do but I am an Auror and must do my duty to uphold the law."

Harry replied "I agree that as an Auror you must uphold the law but at what cost. Will you uphold laws that you know are unjust and biased? Everybody here knows that Umbridge is here only because she has a personal problem with me which is 'I'm right and she's not.'"

The Auror replied "I don't get the luxury to decide what I think is right and wrong as do all Aurors. We willingly gave up that privilege when we became Aurors and must trust that our officials are doing the right thing even if we personally do not like it. I ask you again Mr. Potter, please come peacefully."

Harry asked "If I were to go peacefully, where will you all be taking me?"

The Auror replied "You will be taken to the Ministry holding cells to await trial. If you are found innocent then you will be taken back here with a formal apology from the Ministry but if you are found guilty then you will more than likely be sent to Azkaban prison."

Harry said "Look around you, I think that you all will have a harder time fighting because if you don't think that you will be able to hold me off then what makes you think that you will be able to fight off all the students that are pointing their wands at you."

The Aurors and Umbridge looked around and saw that half of the students were standing up and had their wands pointed at the group of Ministry officials. Some of the students were keeping a wary eye out for those around them that might come to the aid of the Ministry or might take the opportunity to attack the new DA. The ministry officials were getting nervous and knew that they would not be able to take on all these students and if the rumors were true, there was no way they would be able to beat a group of students personally trained by Harry Potter in defensive skills when they were already outnumbered five to one.

Harry took sympathy on the Ministry Aurors so he called out "Everyone, lower your wands. I'll go peacefully just as long as you keep Umbitch, over there away from me."

A few of the Aurors gave sighs of relief and even Umbridge was a little relieved that Harry was coming peacefully. The students were unhappy about the decision because they wanted a chance to get some revenge on Umbridge for what she did to them last year. Although Umbridge was relieved that Harry wasn't going to fight, she was not pleased with his constant insults. Ginny and Kayla reluctantly

lowered their wands and Dumbledore along with the staff did not look too pleased with Harry going into Ministry custody.

Harry whistled and Nightlight flew into the Great Hall through the double doors and landed on Harry's shoulder. Harry said "Let Sunrise and Sunset know that Ginny's in charge now. I want you and Blaze to keep a close watch on her and help her anyway she needs it."

The phoenix gave a short trill of agreement and flew over to Ginny's shoulder. Ginny was petting the phoenix affectionately and said "Are you sure about this Harry? I really don't trust what they are going to do to you."

Harry replied "I don't really like the idea of the Ministry being led by the bitch of all toads but I would rather do that than have everybody be taken into custody. I want you to think about the next Minister and who you would choose and I'll go along with whatever you say. Do try to stay safe and I'll get back here as soon as possible even if it does mean Azkaban."

Ginny gave Harry a hug and a kiss on the lips then she said "I love you Harry. You better come back to me quickly and in one piece."

Harry replied "I love you too. I'll be back soon, just remember that I have tricks up my sleeve also." He whispered the last part to her so she knew that he would be able to get away whenever he really wanted to. Ginny knew about his permanent portkey, not to mention his ability to apparate, and ability to turn into a phoenix and leave if he wanted to. She was thankful that the two of them did go through the ritual to exchange knowledge more and more with each day because she understood more of why he was doing what he was doing.

Harry turned to the head Auror and said "I don't believe that binding my hands will be necessary for I will go on my own free will."

The head Auror just nodded his agreement because he was just happy that they were not going to have to fight their way out of the Great Hall. Harry had three Aurors walk in front of him, two on each side, and three behind him with everybody walking three to a row.

Umbridge had two Aurors with her for standard security reasons for any Minister or in this case Mistress of Magic.

The group used a portkey to get back to the Ministry building in London. They appeared in the middle of the atrium with people bustling in and out as busy as ever but everybody froze at the sight of Harry Potter being taken into custody. There were whispers of what was going on but nobody knew what it was. Harry was escorted down into the lower levels and didn't exactly know where they were leading him until they approached an area that had many Aurors walking back and forth. It was a large office that had a few cubicles near the back and larger offices along the walls, which Harry had seen when he was at the ministry a year ago. At the counter a young witch approached the group and asked, "How may I help you today?"

The Head Auror said "We are here to turn custody of Harry Potter over to the Aurors on duty to transport him to the holding cells until it is time for his trial. He is charged with using an unforgivable and conspiracy against the Ministry of Magic."

The lady looked over at Harry and gasped at what was being said. She said "That can't be true. Tell me you are putting on a joke."

Harry looked at the lady and said "I'm sorry ma'am but it is not a joke. These Aurors came to school and arrested me. Don't worry though, I intend to stand trial and the truth will be told of what happened. May I ask a favor of you ma'am?"

She nodded and Harry said "Can you send notice of this to the Daily Prophet and all major newspapers that I am arrested? Let them know of the charges also and send a message also that I said, 'The truth will come out and to remain faithful to the cause you all know is right in your hearts.'"

She said "I can do that for you Mr. Potter. I'll get on it right away. It's almost time for me to take my break anyway."

Harry said "Please just call me Harry."

He was cut off from saying more by the Aurors that escorted him and pushed to the side. They were met by another group of Aurors that showed up and held Harry by the collar and dragged him over to an all white cell that was padded similar to the ones used for the mentally crazy. Harry was glad that at least they gave him a cushioned bed that was attached to the wall so this way he would be able to get some sleep while here.

Back at school, the student population was in a state of chaos. The news that Harry Potter was arrested and went willingly was troubling the students. There were a few groups of students that were happy at the turn of events including Ron and Hermione's group which wasn't much of a group and Malfoy's group of students sympathetic to the Deatheaters. Although Malfoy's group had no sympathy for Harry, they were surprised at the turn of events and went to inform their parents and Voldemort as quickly as possible.

This was the excuse that Hermione, Ron, Luna, and Neville needed to fuel their cause and justify their actions. Ron was going on and on to any student that was willing to listen that he knew that something was going on with Harry all this time that was why he separated himself from Harry. Most of the students were throwing things at Ron to make him shut up and what made them even angrier was what he did during lunch.

Ron stood up by a pedestal near the Head Table after talking to Dumbledore. Ron was flanked by Hermione, Neville, and Luna. McGonagall called for attention in the Great Hall and all eyes turned to Ron. Ron said "I'm sure that you all now know what has happened during breakfast between Potter and the Ministry. After some thinking and consulting a few people, we have decided that since we will not know when Harry Potter will be getting out of jail or even getting his trial. I will be taking over the DA and have received the blessings of the Headmaster to lead the group along with Hermione, Luna, and Neville. The first meeting will take place tonight after dinner in the Room of Requirement."

What happened next wasn't all unexpected but caught the staff and Ron's group by surprise. Led by Ginny and Kayla, the two of them stood up and walked out of the Great Hall in silence. Students at first

slowly followed by after the two made it out the doors, almost everybody got up and left not bothering to answer verbally to what Ron just said. That marked the moment of the students in general going up against the staff and Ron's group.

To the surprise of those left in the Great Hall which wasn't many, Malfoy and his group approached Ron and the Head Table and told Ron "Are you that stupid Weasley? You just started a war between the students and staff which includes you. Even I would not dare cross the entire student population but you will not have to worry about the Slytherins for we will stay out of your petty conflict." He led his group walking away with a smirk.

That night, Ron and Hermione's group made it to the room early accompanied by staff members that were part of the Order. They set up the room and were waiting with the staff but based on the reaction from that afternoon, they were not expecting many people to come. To their surprise, it seemed like everybody who sided with Harry showed up including Ginny and Kayla.

Ron was about to say something but Ginny interrupted him by saying "Hold up." Everybody turned to look at Ginny. Her brother was getting annoyed at the interruption and undermining of his authority by his little sister. She quickly said "Harry handed authority of the DA over to me prior to leaving this morning. Since he handed the authority over to me and after consulting most if not all of the members, I hereby disband the DA until further notice."

Once again, everybody made for the door and left. This second stance of defiance against the Order was making the Order nervous. They now knew that it was not the staff that was going to lead the students in a fight but Harry was going to lead them in the fight and even Dumbledore had little to no authority in all that was going on. The staff was at a loss of words at what was happening because even Harry's rival Malfoy did not dare try to do what they were doing. To the Order, it was now confirmed a two front war, on one front was Voldemort and the other front was Potter. This was a war that they had to win and had to get Harry to side with them.

The next day there was mass confusion going on in the streets when the Daily Prophet was sent out with the morning posts. Most of the people were sympathetic to Harry and said that even if he is guilty there was probably a reason why he did it. A few groups found this as an excuse to try to discredit him and launched campaigns on how this kid is nothing more than an annoying brat that needs to be put on a leash. Voldemort was ecstatic at this news and was going to try to use it to his advantage and was developing a few new plans. Umbridge was furious that news got out so quickly about his arrest and now a public trial will be needed in order for her to safely put Harry away without causing mass rioting from the people. She even knew that prisoners were willing to side with Harry if he were going to openly lead an attack against the Ministry. Harry was posed with two questions, stay the course and lead a peaceful change or teach the Ministry a harsh lesson and become a terrorist.

A few days later it was time for Harry's trial. The high publicized trial had reporters from across Europe and the full assembly of the Wizengamot. Most of the Order was there along with the entire Weasley family, Hermione, Luna, Neville, Kayla and her mom Alexia, but the most important person to Harry was there which was Ginny. Harry was escorted into the large court room and sat in an uncomfortable high back chair in the middle of the room with the justices sitting in stadium style seating in front of him with Umbridge seated in the middle of the first row. Behind Harry and partly to his sides were the spectators that were watching with anticipation. Harry showed an air of confidence that no matter what happened he was going to walk out of the court room.

After the formalities of the beginning of the trial, and introduction of the people who were going to question him which were Umbridge, Dumbledore, and Bones. Harry elected to have no representation although Mr. Slate Harry's solicitor, was instructed to start the appeal process if he was found guilty.

Umbridge said "Mr. Potter, you are accused of using an unforgivable against Bellatrix Lestrange on the night of you and your companions lead an attack here at the ministry last June. How do you plead?"

Harry said “Guilty.”

This resulted in an eruption of photographs being taken and people talking about Harry admitting guilt to this charge. The main question was why did he admit it and why did he do it. Madame Bones asked, “Mr. Potter, why did you use an unforgivable on her?”

Harry replied “That night everybody’s emotions were running high. I came to the ministry to rescue my Godfather Sirius Black but it turned out to be a trap that was set up by Voldemort. When I got here, fighting broke out between those with me and Death Eaters. We were able to hold them off for a short while but we were about to lose. At that moment, The Order of the Phoenix, lead by Dumbledore showed up and saved us by taking over the fighting. My godfather was there to help rescue me. He was dueling with Bellatrix and was hit by a stunner by the Veil of Death. He fell through the Veil and I made to follow him but it was too late. Remus Lupin stopped me from crossing the veil and at that moment I was extremely emotional at just watching my Godfather die. I turned and saw Lestrange making her escape and I made to follow. I caught up with her in the atrium and we dueled. I shot the Crucio curse at her but it had little effect because I did not have hate behind my curse but righteous anger therefore it did not hurt her very much if at all. Voldemort showed up and we dueled, after awhile Dumbledore showed up and took over the duel. Voldemort got scared and retreated with Lestrange.”

Madame Bones asked “So you used an unforgivable because you were emotional from just watching her kill your Godfather?”

Harry nodded and said “Yes ma’am.”

Umbridge said “You are also charged with conspiracy in aiding the centaurs in attacking a ministry official, how do you plead?”

Harry said “Not guilty. I did not aid them; I just merely let them beat the crap out of you.”

There were more outbursts and after order was restored, Madame Bones asked “Why did you stand by and let them do this to a ministry official?”

Harry responded, “During my fifth year at Hogwarts which was last school year, the ministry tried to take over Hogwarts by sending in Umbridge as a High Inquisitor. It was because of Umbridge that Dementors were sent after me and when I tried to defend myself, she tried to send me to Azkaban and break my wand. She called me a liar for saying Voldemort returned. She tortured me with each session at Detention by using a blood quill. She tried to use an unforgivable with me and managed to reason it all out in front of us. She attacked two members of the Hogwarts staff last year. She turned Hogwarts to hell last year and if somebody wanted to beat the crap out of her that was her business. She’s old enough and should be able to take care of herself. She’s the one that pissed off the centaurs not me. She’s the one that insulted them not me. She’s the one that was going to be taught a lesson not me.”

Umbridge was irritated with his lack of respect and she said “You will address me with my proper title and treat me with the same respect given to a ministry official. The last charge is of you threatening me in front of everybody in the Great Hall.”

Harry responded “I give respect only to those that I respect and give respect in return. In your case you fail neither requirement so sit down.” There were murmurs of agreement and dissent to what Harry said but he quickly added “I did threaten you and I plead guilty to that. I also stand by what I said also. Cross me and see what will happen. I’m not going to bow down to a spineless idiotic bitch.”

Dumbledore stepped in and said “Mr. Potter that will be enough. You will address the Wizengamot with respect. Are there any other charges?”

Umbridge said, “No, but the evidence is obvious as he admitted guilt to two charges.”

Dumbledore turned to Harry and asked “Would you like to say anything else?”

Harry said “No.”

Dumbledore nodded and called for the members of the Wizengamot to debate what will happen especially since he admitted guilt. During the deliberations, Harry looked at the spectators and his eyes met up with Ginny, Kayla, and Alexia. All of them had worry and Harry mouthed back to them 'not to worry.' When his eyes met with those that betrayed him especially Ron and Hermione, there was triumph in Ron's eyes and in Hermione's eyes but there was also sympathy in Hermione's eyes.

After about two hours of deliberations the Wizengamot reassembled and Dumbledore stood up and said "We the Wizengamot find Harry James Potter guilty on the charges of using an unforgivable and threatening a ministry official. We find him not guilty on conspiracy to harm a ministry official. It is the opinion of this body that Harry James Potter is assigned to the custody of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry under the care of Albus Dumbledore and Minerva McGonagall until he is of legal age. He is also fined 10,000 galleons for his crimes. Harry Potter will also be placed under probation until he reaches 17 and will attend anger management sessions with Albus Dumbledore and Minerva McGonagall. Do you understand the verdict?"

Harry stood up and said "I do and what will happen if I refuse to follow those instructions?"

Dumbledore said "You will be sentenced to Azkaban Prison for a week for violating each of those verdicts."

Harry responded "I guess I'm going to Azkaban for two weeks then because I'm not going to be placed under the care of Hogwarts because they can't do anything of good in protecting me which is evident with my past history with them and I will not attend anger management sessions because those two methods are just ways for you to try to control me again."

There was an explosion of talking and Aurors trying to maintain control in response to Harry's defiance. Umbridge was happy that Harry was going to have to spend time in prison. Dumbledore asked "Do you despise us that much that you refuse to work with us?"

Harry responded "I will not work with those that I can not trust and have betrayed me. You should know that by now."

Harry looked over to Ginny and said "I'm sorry but I can't let them try to buy me."

Ginny said "I understand. Try to be safe and take care of yourself. I'll take care of everything for you while you're in prison." She blew him a kiss and Harry blew her one.

Harry yelled over to Kayla and Alexia "Thank you for coming and take care of Ginny."

Kayla and Alexia nodded as Harry was taken away to prison. Nobody was to hear from Harry Potter for the next two weeks. Dumbledore knew that he just screwed up even more and the wizards and witches across Europe were about to hear the true story of what happened and the stance he was taking.

A/N: Thank you to my reviewers. I'll try to answer some of the questions that won't be revealed soon or won't spoil the story. Deatheater children did not participate in the voting to determine their allegiance. Hermione and Ron do have a following but it is no where near the size of Harry's group after all some people will always stay loyal to Dumbledore. The Slytherins that were part of the DA sided with Harry because they didn't really like Dumbledore or the Ministry from the start. The Durmstrang competition will continue. I don't see more poisonings happening and not sure if Harry will confront Ron and Hermione about poisoning him. Finally, I know that many people don't like the idea of Ron and Hermione's betrayal, although the real HP Series will probably not have Ron and Hermione betray Harry. I think that it is a possibility and this story is my opinion of how I like things to happen.

Chapter 29

Battle of Hogwarts

Azkaban was under the watch of Aurors now considering all the Dementors had abandoned their posts and joined Voldemort. Harry was taken to a minimum security cell where he was not going to be watched all the time. As a matter of fact, he will learn quickly that the only time anybody checks up on him is when they bring his meals. Harry spent most of this time contemplating what his next move will be along with the probable moves of both Voldemort and Dumbledore. He didn't care too much about the Ministry because as soon as the new minister is elected everything was going to change. What he wasn't sure about was if the change was going to be for the better or not.

Harry gained support in England with those that prize loyalty and commitment. He also lost support from those who were only putting on act of support for him and were looking for an excuse to turn on him. In general, Harry's support grew. Umbridge also faced major criticisms after accounts of what was said during Harry's trial became public. Umbridge tried to keep it as quiet as possible but that only pushed the press to incriminate her even more. She was almost guaranteed prison time once the new minister is elected. Umbridge was looking for ways to escape England and go into hiding because all of those who supported Fudge and her in the past were either keeping their mouths shut, went into hiding, or turned witness against the two of them.

Back at Hogwarts, life was starting to return back to its normal pace. Although Ginny had temporarily disbanded the DA, Harry had slipped her his watch so she could pass messages along. In secrecy the DA was still practicing under Ginny and Kayla. They decided to choose a different place to hold practice because it was too obvious if people started to come in and out of the Room of Requirement so for the time being, they were using the defense classroom with Remus and Tonks' approval.

Voldemort had planned his first move which was going to be an attack on Hogwarts. This was not going to be an all out attack but more of an attack to gauge the castle's defenses which should be

significantly weaker since Harry was not there to help protect the students. Voldemort's spies informed him that Dumbledore was losing control of the students and that this would be a perfect time to attack with all the confusion of leadership and Potter missing. The attack was set for one week after Harry was sent to prison.

Dumbledore and the Order were having a hard time getting people to join them. Recruitment pretty much came to a halt after the Daily Prophet printed everything that Harry said at his trial. The question now became how are they going to fight a war when the hero will not fight with them? McGonagall was livid with Dumbledore when it came to his treatment of Harry but only expressed her opinion when they were alone. Her unconditional support was still with Dumbledore.

Ginny was training harder than ever on her own at night time or occasionally with Kayla when she was free. Ginny had a feeling that an attack on the castle was imminent given Harry was not there to protect the castle and that was what also scared her. She had confidence in her abilities but her doubts came when thinking about having to lead the students in a fight for their lives. Ginny was wondering how Harry handled the constant pressure and this was just a portion of what he was balancing.

Hermione, Ron, Luna, and Neville now became some of the most hated students at Hogwarts. The four of them were separated from everybody else because nobody would come near them. With the exception of Neville who wasn't a prefect, the other three tried to exert more control over the students by using their status as prefects but it always backfired. Luna now had almost everything she had missing ever since she returned to Ravenclaw tower. Hermione and Ron were having pranks played on them almost every day. The majority of the students were not completely loyal to Harry but at least they knew better then to go and pick a fight with him like Malfoy or worse betray him like Ron and Hermione had done.

The night of the attack on Hogwarts the students were gathered in the Great Hall for dinner along with the entire staff. It was just another night for the students and there were all kinds of conversations floating around the different tables. Then all of a sudden, Nightlight came flying into the Great Hall with a small package in her claws. She

flew over to Ginny and dropped it in front of her. Most people did not take notice for it was now a common sight to see Harry's phoenixes and white tiger about because of Harry's last instructions to keep an eye out for the two witches.

Ginny unrolled the letter and it said,

Gin,

I had some time to think about what has been going on and I have this eerie feeling that something will happen soon. Since I am in Azkaban a wand will do me no good and you already know that I can still protect myself without a wand. I wanted to get this to you so you would have some added protection. If trouble breaks out please use the two rose wands and Nightlight will know to come to let me know that there is trouble. Should there be trouble, you will notice the arrival of a fourth phoenix that loves you more than life itself. Please stay safe.

Love,

Harry

Ginny, knew of Harry's animagus abilities and that Azkaban really couldn't stop a phoenix's ability to fire flight. She realized why he would have to arrive as a phoenix because he couldn't be seen here. Ginny found comfort in the thought that even in prison there was no way the ministry was going to keep Harry from helping her if she needed it. She unwrapped the package and it was Harry's wand holster with the other rose wand in it. She discretely slipped the wand along her free arm while Kayla shielded her as much as possible from the curious eyes from the Head Table.

Kayla said "I'm guessing that Harry is having the same hunches as you are."

Ginny nodded and said "Yeah, he just wanted to make sure that we have as much fire power as possible to defend ourselves if necessary. If a few weird things happen then just play along and I'll tell you about it later."

Kayla nodded and knew that she didn't want to talk about it anymore with everybody around. Near the end of dinner, there were loud sirens going off across the grounds of Hogwarts along with what seemed like bright flashes of light and with each flash a color of light disappeared. Ginny knew from Bill and Charlie that this only meant one thing, the wards around the school was collapsing. Many other students realized this also and panic started to take over the Great Hall.

Dumbledore shot sparks out from his wand and with a wave the sirens died down. He said in a commanding voice "Calm down. All students are to remain in the Great Hall until an order is given to go directly to your dormitories. Please be on Constant Vigilance as many of you know that was the wards to the school collapsing. Hogwarts is under attack. Teachers will accompany me to defend the castle. All students fifth year and above are urged to protect the students should it become necessary."

When Dumbledore finished his speech, Fawkes, Sunrise, Sunset, and Blaze had showed up to help. Fawkes was hovering over Dumbledore with Sunrise over Ginny and Sunset over Kayla. Blaze was in an aggressive stance in his adult form ready to pounce on anything that would attack the girls. Most of the students had their wands out in their hands but not pointing at anybody or anywhere in particular. Ginny didn't have any of her wands out because all she would need to do is flick her wrist and would be firing off spells faster than anybody would be able to lift their hands.

Meanwhile, Nightlight took a trip by fire flight to get to Harry. Harry was startled at first but knew once Nightlight showed up then fighting was about to occur at Hogwarts. Harry turned into a Phoenix similar to Fawkes but only brighter if that was even possible. The two phoenixes disappeared in a ball of blue and white flames while the other one disappeared in a ball of gold flames. Harry did a quick lay over to Potter Mansion so he can safely change into his battle robes just in case he would have to fight in his human form.

Back at Hogwarts, the main grounds were overran with low level Deatheaters being led by McNair and what they didn't know was that

there were a few surprises that Voldemort had for the students and Dumbledore. Dumbledore and most of the staff had made their way down to the open field and started dueling. A few members of the staff were sent to get the rest of the Order and notify the Ministry that Hogwarts was under attack.

The scene out on the grounds was like a horizontal fireworks show. The familiar colors of green and red were firing towards the castle but were met with many magical red shields or impromptu transfigured shields like brick walls. The staff was outnumbered about three to one and the only people that were making progress were Dumbledore, Remus, and Tonks. Snape was not permitted to enter the fight and was instructed to go to the dungeons to await further orders. It was a moonless night so you couldn't really see the wizards and witches fighting and only could tell where people were by the source of spells.

Dumbledore decided that it was a greater disadvantage for his staff to not see their enemies especially considering they were using unforgivable spells while the staff was restricted to stunning and bludgeoning spells. Dumbledore raised his wand to the air and yelled, "Lumos Maxima!"

What resulted was an eruption of bright light shooting across the sky and staying about the battle. In that moment, almost everybody except for Dumbledore was blinded because of the sudden change from dark to light. A few of the students were gathered along the large windows along the walls of the Great Hall and watched the battle. When the light erupted in the air, the students saw that there were more enemies being held back along the tree line. Along the tree lines were Dementors and three dragons hovering over the forest with a Deatheater on each of them. The dragons were familiar to the students who were around during the Tri-wizard tournament. The three dragons were a Hungarian Horntail, Norwegian Ridgeback, and a Chinese Fireball.

The students paled at the sight that was about to meet the professors who did not have the clear view as the students. The professors were the first to recover and started to go on the offensive. The easiest figures to see in the battle were Hagrid because he was so tall and Dumbledore because of the phoenix floating above him and singing

his phoenix song to encourage the professors. When it was obvious that the Deatheaters were going to lose, they began to fall back little by little to pull the professors into a trap.

At least that was what the students thought was happening but the Dementors had moved most of their numbers to the opposite side of the castle. The Dementors staying along the tree line was a diversion because in the next moment there were screams coming from the Great Hall. The students watching the battle turned around and saw that Dementors had broken through the large doors to the Great Hall and busting their way through the windows. Ginny and Kayla were the first to recover from the shock and both shouted, "Expecto Patronum!"

Ginny was only using one of the rose wands. Kayla's patronus was a brilliant silver eagle. Ginny couldn't form a patronus at first but on her second try, she was thinking about the night of the Ball when Harry and she finally kissed each other. When she yelled the Patronus charm for the second time, a brilliant silver phoenix flew out from her wand. Her patronus had a lightening bolt scar on its right foot. The group of students watched in awe at first and anybody who was able to summon a patronus started firing off their silver creatures. Ginny noticed that the only ones able to summon the patronus charm were the ones in the DA although a few of them were not part of the new DA.

The people who could only shoot a mist out of their wands were using the mist to shield the students that were near them. The battle within the Great Hall did not last very long because the strength of the combined patronuses were charging at all the Dementors without mercy. Ginny started barking out orders for the fourth year and fifth year students to shield the first through third year students and assemble all the younger years up by the Head Table so they wouldn't be surrounded. The fourth and fifth years complied without even thinking and formed a perimeter around the frightened students. The sixth years were instructed to form a front line along the right side of the hall and keep an eye out for anymore attacks. The seventh years were instructed to form a front line along the left side of the hall and keep an eye out for attacks from that side and to keep an eye on the professors.

The professors were having little trouble in their fight and started to engage the Dementors that were around as decoys. There were a few objections to the orders that Ginny was giving out and among those were Malfoy's group who had a smug look and just sat at the Slytherin table joking with one another like a fight was not going on. The other group was the small band of people loyal to Dumbledore which was led by Hermione and Ron. That group did not want to be outdone by a fifth year not to mention Ron who was not going to listen to orders from his little sister. They were gathered near the younger students acting as if they were the only ones shielding the younger students.

Ginny along with her second in command, Kayla, decided to take their post at the center of the Hall to better give orders and fight should something happen. What nobody realized was that approximately twenty mid level Deatheaters were making a slow trek into the castle under the cover of the Dementors that were supposed to have eliminated the students. They were going to make a triumphant charge into the Great Hall to celebrate and this group was led by Avery. They did not know that the Dementors were defeated and defeated quickly at that so they were about to walk into a well defended castle while the students thought nobody was left inside of the castle and were facing out into the area surrounding the castle and not paying much attention to the main gates with the exception of a few leaders in the DA like Susan and Justin from Hufflepuff and Ginny and Kayla who was keeping a wary eye at the doors while constantly scanning the room.

The Deatheaters made their way into the main hallway and charged into the room of students. They were shocked at first that the students weren't given the kiss and laying lifeless on the ground and the students shocked that Deatheaters managed to make their way into the castle and run around. The first bludgeoning spells were shot by Ginny and Kayla. After that, chaos broke out as a few students attention was taken away from their posts and started to charge at the Deatheaters. The DA members guarding the doors pulled back due to Ginny's orders to suck them in so that the Deatheaters would be surrounded on three sides. Ginny commanded half of the students to maintain watch along the windows while the other half to join the

fight against the Deatheaters. She also called for every member of the new DA to join the fight at the main doors.

Malfoy's group obviously did not realize that there was another group of Deatheaters to attack the castle and wasn't sure what to do. They couldn't join the fight against the students because they would surely be slaughtered due to being outnumbered by so many students. On the other hand, they couldn't fight against the Deatheaters because they would be punished for it by their masters and their families so they elected to pull off to the far corner of the room and huddle together as closely as possible and only protect themselves from stray spells.

Nightlight and Harry in his phoenix form erupted in their respective burst of flames in the middle of the Great Hall. Harry flew down and landed on Ginny's shoulder. When she looked at the phoenix a wide grin formed across her face because she knew it was Harry because of the bright colors, bright green eyes, and the lightening scar that was on his right claw. Ginny ruffled Harry's plumage so he gave her an indignant look. Afterwards, he rubbed his head against hers affectionately.

They were interrupted by Kayla saying, "Ginny, I'm sure you'll tell me later what's going on with you and that Phoenix but we have a slight problem here." She was motioning to the Deatheaters that were dueling with the students. The fight was fairly even as the Deatheaters were more advanced in their dueling abilities but the students were had the numbers and enough knowledge to protect themselves. The students were taught in more defense skills instead of attack and only the DA really had enough knowledge to do attacking because that's what Harry started to focus on.

They turned their attention to the battle and Harry jumped off Ginny and flew towards the Deatheaters. Sunrise, Sunset, and Nightlight knew that the fourth phoenix was really Harry in his animagus form so they followed him to join the fight. The phoenixes paired up and each pair took on a Deatheater each. They first started to claw at the Deatheater then would bite them with their beaks to disfigure the Deatheaters. The final blow would come when the phoenixes landed on the Deatheater and all of a sudden their shoulders would burst into

flames. The Deatheaters were on fire because the phoenixes used a form of their fire flight and shot magical flames on the Deatheaters through their claws when they landed on the Deatheaters.

Other Deatheaters were trying to put out the flames by shooting water at the burning bodies but it did not help. It did not take long for the Deatheaters to die from their bodies shutting down due to being burned while their minds went crazy from all of the panic. After about five Deatheaters going down by being burned to death the rest of them started to panic and ran away. They ran as fast they could away from the wards so they could apparate away to safety.

The fighting out on the field was getting under control also. The teachers had just finished defeating the last Dementor and were checking each other for injuries. None of the professors were seriously injured. Professor Trelawney was the worst injured and she had a broken right arm and shoulder. The group was making their way back when they heard a few roars coming from behind them. When they turned around they saw the three dragons flying towards them.

The students also heard the roars and looked over the Forbidden Forest to see where the sounds were coming from. The Phoenixes saw the dragons first and flew out from the Great Hall to intercept the dragons. Harry and his three phoenixes were joined by Fawkes and went after the closest dragon which was the Norwegian Ridgeback. The dragon was shooting fire at the phoenixes aimlessly and it just looked like he was shooting the flames in any direction. Two of the Phoenixes went to attack the dragon's eyes while the other two went to attack its wings. Harry went after the dragon's rider and repeated the burn process from before. The Phoenixes were ruffed up a bit from the amount of force coming from the wings with each flap and sporadic movements of the body and head. It took about five minutes before the Ridgeback went down.

While the Phoenixes were engaged in a fight against the Ridgeback, the professors took on the next closest target which was the Horntail. The Professors were doing their best to hit the rider of the dragon and to hit the dragon in its eyes. Grawp heard the battle taking place and was afraid that Hagrid might be hurt so he made his way to the castle

to help. Grawp came from out of the forest and charged the Hungarian Horntail. When the Horntail hovered low enough to the ground, Grawp jumped up and grabbed the dragon by its feet and dragged it down. When the two landed, it felt like an earthquake had hit Hogwarts. When the Horntail hit the ground, Grawp jumped on it and started beating the dragon as hard and as fast as he could. The rider fell from the dragon when it was being dragged down and died when he hit the ground. The professors rushed over to help Grawp and concentrated on shooting their spells together while Hagrid was shooting arrows from his crossbow.

Ginny was proud when she saw Harry and the other phoenixes take down the Ridgeback. She didn't pay much attention to the Horntail because she was more interested in making sure that Harry was fine. When she saw the Chinese Fireball come over to help the Ridgeback she panicked and made a mad dash out to help Harry. She was followed closely by Kayla and the DA that was loyal to Harry. The rider of the Fireball didn't see the Horntail go down so he didn't know that he had no chance of getting out of this alive. The Phoenixes were trying to recover from injuries they sustained when fighting the Ridgeback when the Fireball came through so fast that they didn't know what hit them. Harry managed to grab Sunrise and Sunset and in a burst of flames took them back to Potter Mansion and placed them in the barn to heal. Nightlight took hold of Fawkes and took him back to Dumbledore's office.

Nightlight and Harry returned in about one minute and charged at the Fireball. Nightlight and Harry decided to go after the Fireball's eyes first and then after the driver. Ginny made it down to the battle in record time and after what she saw, she decided to use both of the rose wands and firing stunning spells as fast as she could. Kayla followed her lead and started to fire her spells as fast as she could. At first there was no reaction from the Fireball but he soon got irritated and turned towards the group of students rushing forward. When Harry saw the change in the Fireball's attention, he noticed that the dragon was going to go after the student so he decided to take out the driver as fast as possible. Nightlight followed Harry's lead and the two fought with the driver who ended up killing himself because he lost his balance and fell from over two hundred feet in the air. When

the driver fell off the Fireball didn't know what to do so he decided to lash out against anything that moved.

The professors were making their way over to the Fireball with Grawp accompanying them. Grawp was waiting for the Fireball to hover low enough but ended up getting hit by the Fireball's tail. Grawp landed hard on the ground and when the dragon tried to go after Grawp who was laid out on the ground, Ginny managed to hit the Fireball in its eyes and all of the professors including the students that came down to the field were letting loose with a barrage of spells that even the Fireball could not withstand. The Fireball collapsed as Ministry Aurors were making there way onto the grounds.

Ginny hid her wands away as quickly as possible and pulled out her normal one. Harry flew over to her and affectionately rubbed his head on to Ginny's while on her shoulder. Ginny whispered, "Thanks Harry. Are you ok?"

Harry nudged her and gave a short trill to say yes and as if she knew what he was asking, she said, "Don't worry. I'm not hurt."

Harry nodded and gave another short trill and disappeared in a burst of gold flames. Nightlight came over and landed on Ginny's shoulder. Ginny ruffled his feathers and he started singing a phoenix song to sooth her. Dumbledore approached the students and asked "Why are you all out here? You were all instructed to stay in the Great Hall."

Ginny said "Professor, the Great Hall was under attack also and after we repelled the attack we came down here to fight the dragons."

McGonagall came up just in time to hear what Ginny said and asked "Are there any casualties in the Great Hall?"

Ginny shook her head and said "No ma'am. There are a few students that are still shock but in general nobody is seriously hurt. At least no one is seriously hurt that I know of."

Dumbledore said "Follow me Ms. Weasley to my office. You have more explaining to do. Ms. Granger, Mr. Weasley, and Ms. Rapp please follow me also."

The group made their way to the Headmaster's office with McGonagall taking over the care of the students. Pomfrey went to the hospital wing to tend to those that were injured and she was thankful that nobody was seriously hurt in the attack. The Aurors were instructed to secure the castle and monitor the grounds and the hallways of the castle. Madame Bones also showed up and went with Dumbledore to his office.

When they arrived in the office Professor Dumbledore asked "Ms. Weasley, now tell me what happened in the Great Hall after the professors left."

She started to tell the story exactly as it happened with the exception of the identity of the fourth phoenix. She said that an unknown phoenix showed up and just started to help. After she finished the story, Dumbledore asked the rest "Is there anything else that you all would like to add or comment about?"

Ron said "I think that Ginny has understated the roles that Hermione, Luna, Neville, and I played in this. We contributed a great deal in the fight in the Great Hall and organized the defense of the younger students."

Hermione nodded because she felt the same but in reality they didn't do anything more than most of the students in the Great Hall. They did help in fighting against the Deatheaters but were not responsible for the defense of the younger students. Ginny just shook her head and rolled her eyes as Ron spoke but decided not to say anything and just let them talk for she knew the truth and whatever story Dumbledore heard tonight didn't really matter all that much.

Madame Bones was quiet most of the time just observing the people's behavior and drew the conclusion that Ginny was the leader in the defense of the Great Hall and the other two were just trying to get some of the credit. She was amused though that Kayla didn't seem to care what they were saying and just played with her hair like nothing happened tonight. In reality, Kayla was listening closely but felt the same as Ginny.

When Hermione finished speaking which was the same as Ron's account Dumbledore asked Madame Bones "Amelia, would you like to comment on anything?"

Madame Bones said "I came here to see about leaving Aurors here at Hogwarts and Hogsmeade to help better secure the school. I was going to leave twelve Aurors at the school but after hearing Ms. Weasley's account of what happened tonight, I'm inclined to leave about six as the students seem more then capable to take care of themselves."

Dumbledore said "I would prefer that you left at least ten Aurors but the decision is up to you. If you would excuse us Madame Bones, there are some things I must discuss that concerns the students."

Madame Bones nodded and left the office and left ten Aurors behind based on Dumbledore's request and placed them on twenty four hour duty of the castle. She left Tonks and Moody who was recently recalled to service in charge because Moody had the most experience and Tonks because she was the most familiar of what has been going on around the castle all year long.

After she left, Dumbledore gave Ginny a knowing and questioning look and asked "Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?"

Ginny thought about it for a second and said "No sir."

He asked Kayla the same thing but she also responded in the negative. Knowing that they weren't going to say anything else he instructed the two of them to return to the dormitories and gave each a detention with McGonagall for disregarding his order on not to leave the Great Hall. He also instructed them to tell all the other students that left the Great Hall that they also had detention with their Heads of House.

When they left, Dumbledore told Hermione and Ron "I want you two to keep a close eye on Ginny and Kayla until Harry returns."

The two of them nodded and knew that that was also the end of their meeting. The two of them left and planned out how they were going

to spy on Ginny and Kayla. Ginny and Kayla on the other hand had a feeling that that was what Dumbledore was going to do so they were planning ways of telling each other secrets and losing the two spies when they needed to be alone.

After Harry had left the battle, he went back to Potter Mansion and quickly changed back to the robes that he was wearing in prison. He then headed back to his cell. Nobody at Azkaban noticed that he'd even left for the evening and Harry decided to spend the rest of his time healing from minor bruises and injuries so he went to sleep thinking about Ginny.

A/N: Thank you to my reviewers once more. To answer a few questions and not reveal any answers that will happen soon. I guess you could say I am past the half way mark in the story. I don't see this story passing 40 chapters but you never know. I have an idea how I want the story to end. The question becomes will the story end on good terms between Harry, Ginny, and Kayla with the Order, Ron, and Hermione. Should the story end happy or Harry hating the world?

Chapter 30

Potter's Patriots

A few days after the attack on Hogwarts, Harry was interrupted from his self meditation by a familiar high pitch female squeal. Harry looked up to see his cell door opening up and there were three Aurors and Umbridge standing there. The Aurors shoved Umbridge through the door with a look of disgust. An Auror Harry didn't know said in a deep growling voice, "Potter, since you're going to be leaving soon. We decided to leave you a friend who will be staying here when you leave." With that the Aurors left as the cell door closed.

Harry looked at Umbridge with contempt and asked, "What are you doing here Umbitch?"

Umbridge looked defeated and just said, "Twenty years sentence in Azkaban."

Harry's look of contempt changed to a grin thinking of Umbridge getting twenty years in Azkaban. He also knew that this must have meant that a new Minister of Magic must have been chosen. He asked her, "Who is the new Minister of Magic?"

She mumbled "Weasley."

She didn't say it low enough because Harry managed to hear her. He decided that that must mean that Ginny sided with her father and he couldn't really blame her for it after all they were still family. Just as long as Mr. Weasley wasn't going to be Dumbledore's puppet then he would probably be a really good Minister. Harry also wanted to get his kicks in while he could and what better opportunity then now because there was nobody here to protect her and who was going to believe anything she said considering she was now discredited in the Wizarding world.

Harry slowly walked up to her and put on an act of lust while saying, "You know Umbitch, it's been a while since I've seen a woman and although you're not much of one I think that I could have some fun with you."

Umbridge's eyes widen in fear and surprise at what Harry was doing and slowly backed herself into a corner. She stuttered, "L-Leave me alone. You'll be out of here soon."

Harry continue to close the distance to her, bent down to her ear, and whispered, "I'm going to take you whether you like it or not." He smiled after he said this but Umbridge didn't see it.

Umbridge's breathing became shallow as she became fearful of having to fight off Harry. Harry made to kiss her and pulled in close to her lips and just before he was about to kiss her he flicked his wrist and knocked her out. He then dragged her onto the bed and ruffed up her clothes and hair a little. When she was about to come to her senses again, Harry crawled into the bed and wrapped a hand around her. She woke up shocked and thought she had just slept with Harry and was mumbling nonsense as she tried to remember what happened.

Harry smirked at her and didn't say anything. He let her believe that they slept together although the thought of it was revolting to him. He continued to have fun messing with her head every moment the two of them were awake together. By the time Harry was freed, Umbridge was just lying on the bed in shock and unable to move. When the Aurors came to bring them their food, they were wondering what Harry did to her because it was like she was a vegetable.

The day of Harry's release from Azkaban, many people were waiting anxiously for him to return to Hogwarts. Unlike the rest of the 'guests' of Azkaban, Harry was not rundown or even phased by his stay. That was in part thanks to all the Dementors that left Azkaban and the Aurors that were on guard did not want to fool with a person that they all knew would be released and would make their lives a living hell once he got out if they crossed him during his short stay.

Three Aurors along with the newly appointed Minister of Magic, Arthur Weasley were present to free him from Azkaban. He was escorted to the Ministry of Magic to sign some paper work to finalize his release from prison. Dumbledore along with Lupin and Tonks were there waiting for him when he finished his business in the

ministry. When Harry left, he was consumed in a hug once he stepped into the atrium.

Remus was the one that was hugging Harry and he was excitedly saying “You’re out safe and sound. Did anything happen to you while you were in there?” He proceeded to look Harry from head to toe and spun Harry around to check him from behind.

Harry was just as happy to see Remus and decided to humor Remus for the time being. Harry said “It’s good to see you too Remus. Don’t worry; nothing happened to me while I was in Azkaban.”

Dumbledore came up and said “Harry, it’s good to see you well.”

Harry turned to him, nodded, and in an even voice said “Likewise Professor.”

The emotionless manner that Harry was using on him took him by surprise for a short moment because he thought that Azkaban if anything would have opened his eyes up to the type of evil that was in the world but it apparently hadn’t have that effect.

Tonks, Remus, and Harry were talking happily to each other as they made their way out of the Ministry followed by Dumbledore and Arthur. Harry also took a cold stance against Arthur because he didn’t know for sure where Arthur stood in everything and with the history in the Weasley family; the only person he trusted was Ginny. Tonks and Remus were filling Harry in on the Battle at Hogwarts which was the highlight over the last two weeks but he didn’t let on that he was at the battle as the odd phoenix of the group. He played along and continued to ask questions after questions about what happened and tried to push everybody to go a little faster so he can meet up with Ginny.

The group used the floo in the Ministry to get to Three Broomsticks and from there; they were going to walk to the castle. Upon exiting the restaurant, they were bombarded by reporters trying to get a statement and Harry Potter’s post Azkaban pictures. The Aurors tried to maintain control but there weren’t enough of them to run crowd

control and spent most of their time within an arm's reach of the Minister.

A female reporter yelled out "Were you mistreated in prison?"

Harry wasn't going to answer them at first but decided to just get this over with because if he didn't say something than all of the reporters were going to make up whatever they wanted. Harry said "No, I was not mistreated in Azkaban."

Another reporter yelled out "Mr. Potter, do you have a response for all those that turned their backs on you when you went to prison?"

Harry thought about it for a moment and said "It's interesting to know that when some people listen to the evidence they still don't seem to understand what is right and wrong. This world is not painted in black and white and most situations can not be decided as a clear cut right and no. I guess for those that turned their backs on me then all of them can go suck an egg for all I care. To those that continue to try to make a positive change in the world, please keep up the good work and always remain vigilant."

A male reporter asked "What are your comments about the rumors that you and Headmaster Dumbledore are enemies now?"

Harry said "I believe that everybody who knows the relationship between the two of us that Professor Dumbledore and I have an interesting relationship. We were allies in the past but now I'm not too sure about that anymore. Let's just say that since the school and its staff has failed to look out for my interest and consider my opinions on matters that concerned me, I was forced to take actions to make sure that nobody else will walk all over me."

The same reporter asked "What do you mean your interests? Has the school abused their privileges?"

Harry knew that he was fishing for dirt now and by the looks in all the other reporter's eyes he could tell they were anxiously waiting and wanting him to say that the school overstepped its boundaries Harry also knew that what he said here was going to be important and

could result in a major inquiry into how Hogwarts business has been handled ever since he entered Hogwarts. He replied "I believe we all have our own reasons for going about our objectives and those of Hogwarts and mine have clashed a few times in history."

The reporters were a bit put out with his answer and Dumbledore was relieved that Harry didn't bring the knife down on Hogwarts. Dumbledore didn't want to risk another incident where Harry would be able to bring damage to the light side especially since things were starting to turn in the direction of good with the removal of Fudge and Umbridge in Azkaban. Arthur Weasley became the Minister of Magic in a fairly smooth election with Madame Bones who is a staunch defender of the light and now has the ability to be more proactive with Arthur as minister. Even though Dumbledore did not want to go to war with Harry, he knew that with Harry out of prison they had a better chance of winning although the stance and leadership of Ginny is proving to be just as strong and firm as Harry's was when he led the DA.

Harry knew that he should leave also because the longer he talked, the more the reporters would be able to twist what he said. Harry said, "One last question before I leave." He then pointed to a young man in the middle of the group that didn't really look like a reporter but a bystander just curious as to what is going on.

The man asked "Mr. Potter, how do you feel about the Ministry of Magic?"

Harry said, "I don't really know as of now because I don't know how the Ministry has been after Minister Weasley became the new Minister of Magic. I just hope that it is better than what was in the past because it doesn't take much to be a better Minister than Fudge and Umbridge. Whatever will happen will come out in due time."

Harry was escorted away by the Hogwarts staff members and the Minister with his Aurors to the complaining of all the reporters that were trying to ask him more questions. Harry, Remus, and Tonks, continued to walk a few steps in front of everybody as Remus and Tonks continued to tell him about the story of the Battle of Hogwarts and the attempts of Dumbledore in taking over the DA. When they

explained the parts with the DA, the group spoke in hushed tones so nobody could over hear them. Harry knew all about this but didn't want to say anything but it was interesting to hear the story from a different prospective from Ginny's.

By the time the group made it into the castle it was already lunch time so they made their way to the Great Hall. Upon entering the Great Hall, the entire place went quiet at the scene of Harry and the professors making their way into the room. Ginny and Harry ran towards each other and met half way hugging and giving each other a few kisses. Kayla was walking towards the two of them while the professors were making their way to the Head Table.

Kayla was the first to say something which interrupted the couple when she said "Harry, it's good to see you out and apparently well."

Harry was holding Ginny around the waist with the two of them facing Kayla when he said "It's good to see that you got out of the fight here unscratched."

Kayla said "It was fun and Ginny told me about her phoenix friend so you don't have to worry about me knowing. Besides, you were in there for so long, Ginny was starting to get so lonely that I started to get the impression that she was hitting on me." She added a smirk at the end.

Harry responded, "You know, I wouldn't be able to knock her on her taste. You do look pretty good Kayla." He tightened his grip adoringly around Ginny.

Kayla decided to play this game with him and replied "If I didn't know better Harry, are you flirting with me?"

Harry said "It's not something that I can control very much anymore. Staying in prison does some very interesting things to a person's mind, especially a teenager with uncontrollable hormones."

Kayla suggestively said "You know, I'm sure that Ginny would be more than willing to satisfy those hormones, lord knows she is about to lose control of her own hormones."

Harry flirtingly said “I was thinking more like you joining us. I would be able to enjoy every man’s fantasy, being with two beautiful women at the same time.”

Kayla gave a thoughtful look and said “That is an interesting proposition and being the Boy-Who-Lived definitely will raise any girl’s status. Plus, from what I hear from Ginny, there are definite perks.”

Harry raised one of his eyebrows and replied “I heard something interesting about how in the Wizarding world; a wizard can be married to more than one witch. Maybe we can work out something.”

Ginny took a serious tone in responding “Mr. Potter, do you seriously think that you will be able to handle me alone? Besides, I’m not sharing you with anybody even if it is with Kayla.”

Harry gave her a kiss on the top of her head and said “I was wondering when you were going to say something.”

Ginny said “Let’s just say that I am very possessive of you Mr. Potter and if I have to, I will hex every girl that comes near you.”

Kayla asked in a mocking tone “So does this mean that I don’t get to share Harry?”

Ginny replied “I tell you what, when I’m done with him you can have him.”

Harry mockingly replied “When will that be so I can start counting down?”

Ginny turned to Harry again and said “Don’t get any ideas Harry. If I have to, I will tie you to my bed just to make sure that I know where you are.” After saying that she realized what she said and blushed.

Harry said “You know, I can get used to that. Besides from what happened in the Great Hall, the two of you can go save the world and I’ll stay home and cook.”

The three of them made their way over to a spot where the three of them could be alone and continued to joke around with one another. There really was no reason to try to fill in each other with what has been happening because Ginny and Harry have been sharing information whenever something happened. To the trio, the rest of the world did not exist anymore.

That evening while back in Harry's trunk, the three of them were playing around when Kayla decided to leave the two lovebirds alone. After what seemed like hours of snogging, the two of them were just laying there in silence when Ginny broke it and said "Harry, can I ask you something?"

Harry rolled over to look at her and said "Sure, what did you want to ask?"

Ginny said "Today, after you arrived, there were many people that are part of the new DA that wanted to know when you were going to restart the group."

Harry said "I didn't think about it very much but I guess we can start tomorrow if necessary. The question is where are we going to meet?"

Ginny said "I was thinking about that and I think that a good place to hold the meetings would be in the Chamber of Secrets."

Harry looked at her closely and said, "Are you sure about that? I would have guessed that that would be the last place that you would want to be."

Ginny nodded and said "It's true that I don't want to go there or ever return there but I know that if you are there with me than I will be fine. I'm sure it will be hard at first but it will probably give me some closure."

Harry gave her a kiss on her forehead and said "I tell you what. Why don't we spend part of the day tomorrow going down there so you can get used to it and if you are able to feel somewhat comfortable about being down there then we can have our meetings down there?

It is a pretty good idea to have the meetings down there considering I'm the only one that is able to open the chamber."

Ginny leaned over and gave him a long kiss before saying "You're the sweetest guy in the world."

Harry blushed at the compliment and after a little bit more snogging. The two of them innocently slept together in the same bed. Harry and Ginny have been staying in the same bed ever since they went through the ritual to exchange knowledge. They never did anything more than kissing but if anybody were to walk in on them then they would usually see the two of them in a very compromising position.

The next morning at breakfast, Harry was enjoying his breakfast when the morning post arrived and to his surprise three owls arrived for him. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla were surprised as Harry started to take the letters from the three owls. The three of them took turns reading each letter. The first letter written on what looked like real expensive parchment read:

Mr. Harry James Potter,

My name is Alpha. I am the head of the Goblin Federation which is the governing body for all goblins. You may be more familiar with us as the Goblins that work at Gringott's Bank in Diagon Alley. I am speaking on behalf of all Goblins in expressing our desire to form an alliance with you against Lord Voldemort. You made a positive impression on my race when you stood up for us in Diagon Alley against your ministry. We would like to organize a meeting to discuss the terms of our alliance. Just send a message addressed to Alpha in care of Gringott's Branch in Diagon Alley and we will receive your message through them.

Alpha

The second letter which was written on a piece of cloth read:

Master Harry Potter,

I am Houseman the leader of the House Elves Alliance that governs the matters of House Elves worldwide. We are a fairly unknown governing body that enforces and creates regulations concerning how Elves in general act. We have another division to our group that is outside of the House Elves known as Strike Elves. They are the body that enforces Elven laws and protects all Elves from war. We have remained neutral in all wars in the past and now is the time for us to act due to the growing threat of Lord Voldemort. We have been following your progress ever since you were born and believe that you are the champion that we seek so we desire to form an alliance with you to fight this war. Please send your reply to one of your House Elves and if you agree then we can discuss the terms of our alliance.

Houseman

The third letter was written on what looked like a thin piece of wood:

Harry Potter,

It is not common for Centaurs to use owls but we only do so when we need to contact those that live outside our domains. We have heard of your history of standing up for the rights of Centaurs and would like to extend the same courtesy to you. We wish to form an alliance with you to fight this war. Send word to us by sending a message to Bane. He will be your contact person and negotiate with you on behalf of Centaurs across England.

Ronan

The trio looked at each other and watch for any expression or opinions on what those three letters said. Harry asked them "What do you think about this?"

Ginny said "We could use their help in this war. The house elves would give us access to every wizarding house and public facility that uses house elves. The centaurs would give us access to all the forests and wooded areas across England. The goblins control all of our money and would be able to cut off funding to Death eaters. This looks to be a pretty good alliance if we could get it together."

Kayla said "That's just it. It seems too good to be true. What if all of this was some joke or worse? This could be a trap to catch Harry."

Ginny nodded and said "It is a possibility but I think that we should prepare for that but meet up with everybody to set up this alliance."

Harry said "They all seem pretty eager to form an alliance with us but what do we have to offer them?"

Kayla said "We have the DA, which could turn into a very strong fighting force. Not to mention your influence in the Wizarding world has proven beneficial for magical creatures."

Ginny said "Maybe we should ask Remus and Tonks to help us on this one. They will know more about negotiating and things of truces and treaties better than any of us."

Harry nodded and the three went up to the Head Table to talk to Remus and Tonks who were off to one side of the table. The five of them were whispering to each other so that nobody else could over hear but Dumbledore, Snape, and McGonagall were intrigued as to what was happening. It was decided that the best place for this meeting to occur will be at Hogwarts but in order for that to happen, they were going to have to let Dumbledore into what they were planning. The group spent most of the day planning with each other and at dinner that evening sent a message to Dumbledore with only part of their plans. After Dumbledore talked to Remus and Tonks, because Harry did not want to talk to the Headmaster when he didn't have to, they compromised that the meeting will take place at Hogwarts in a few days but the Order will be represented at the meeting as well along with the Ministry. After some negotiating, it was agreed that outside of the trio, Remus, and Tonks, all the other groups will be permitted to have three representatives each.

Harry also called for a meeting of the DA for the next evening. Most of the members of the DA were excited at going down to the Chamber of Secrets so the meeting area decided was the girl's bathroom. Moaning Myrtle was there and happy to find all of the

possible company. After some persuading from Harry, Myrtle agreed to keep the meeting area a secret.

The group slid their way down to the Chamber and was surprised to find it so clean. What the rest of the group did not know was that earlier that day, Harry, Ginny, and Kayla went down to help Ginny get used to the environment and clean it up a bit so that everybody wasn't going to be coming out of the chamber dirty. Parts of the basilisk like the fangs and skin were saved by Harry to use in some of the more rare potions that would make Snape envious because he had no access to basilisk fangs, poison, or skin.

Ginny was extremely nervous at first and wouldn't let go of Harry's hand. When they went to the main area of the chamber where Harry fought the basilisk, Harry pulled out a pensieve. Ginny was surprised because Harry didn't let her know that he was planning this. Harry inserted his memory of what happened down in the Chamber so she could finally see the memory where it happened and hopefully would give her closure once and for all. Ginny was thankful because it did help her get over her fears and insecurities about Tom Riddle quickly and what was left behind were minor questions that anybody would have.

They cleaned up the place and prepared the Chamber for the student's arrival but adding a ground illuminated walkway so the students wouldn't get lost. They spent a few hours down in the chamber which turned out to be well worth the effort considering the area doesn't seem as gloomy, dirty, and uncomfortable as before.

The DA was hesitant at first to enter but after watching Ginny go back down into the Chamber without a worry the group followed. This meeting started out with Harry asking a question, he asked, "From what I can tell, Hermione and Ron's DA has also started up. They are keeping the initials of DA but changed their name back to Dumbledore's Army therefore we need a new name. If we keep the initials DA, then it can get very confusing when talking about either our group or their group. I wanted to know if any of you had a recommendation."

Everybody was thinking and nobody said anything until Kayla spoke up. She said "I'm sure many of you know about the American Revolution but to you all it is called the War of Insurrection. Well, in summary, the Americans revolted against the British government in an effort to gain equality for those in America and for freedom from the British Crown. During that war, the Americans were known as rebels to the British but called themselves patriots. It is similar to our situation now. We are fighting a war where we have to stand up to our own government for the equal treatment of magical creatures and freedom from Voldemort's threats and fears. We also are fighting a war against our own Ministry and the Order of the Phoenix because they want to suppress our group and make us follow their mantra. If anything, we can see ourselves as patriots fighting for the rights of not just wizards and witches but also for magical creatures in a stance against what Fudge and Umbridge has done. The new minister didn't have much time to do anything yet so we don't know how he will fight this war but for now, it is up to us. I think that we should be known as Potter's Patriots."

The group was thinking about what was said and many of them agreed that they were not only fighting against Voldemort but for an ideology of fair treatment and equality for all. It was time for a young generation to stand up and revolt against the ideas of the old generation.

Ginny said "It is true that my father has just become Minister and I'm not sure how much change he can make with all of those old discriminating theories floating around with wizard superiority. I think that with time and with our help than we will be able to help him change the world for the better. I like the idea of Potter's Patriots."

The group murmured their approval and when a vote was called it was a unanimous approval. Harry abstained from voting because he thought it was weird for the group to name themselves after him. The rest of the practice session went as planned with everybody brushing up on their skills which were at or above sixth year level for most of the members in the newly formed group Potter's Patriots or the Patriots for short.

Near the end of the meeting, it was decided upon a uniform would be used also if the group should formally enter a fight so they could better distinguish themselves from other groups. They were going to wear black battle robes with dark blue trim and on their cloaks would have their last names above a picture of the scales of justice with crossed arrows on each scale. The words 'Potters Patriots' would be written at the base of the scales.

A/N: Thank you all of my reviewers and I'll try to answer some of your questions that won't give away from the story. Well, after the attack on the Dursley's I failed to mention what happened to them. Let's just say that after a few days they returned to Privet Drive which was already repaired by use of Magic and the people on the street were Obliviated to the events of that night. As for the Magical World Revolt Challenge, I was asked to issue the challenge and haven't heard from him about it since. Well, if you want to participate then let me know and I'll add your name under the challenge which is listed in my profile for others that are interested to go and read your story. As for the story, be prepared for some more surprises in a few chapters concerning Hermione and Ron.

Chapter 31

The Alliance of Magic

The day of the meeting arrived and it was decided that it would take place down in the main courtyard at Hogwarts to make it easier for the centaurs. A tent was erected to shield everybody from the elements should it rain or get too hot or cold that day. Inside of the tent looked like a beautiful gallery. There was a large round table with enough seats for everybody with the exception of the centaurs because they were going to stay on their hoofs the entire time. In the middle of the tent above the round table was a beautiful glass chandelier. From the inside, you can see through the tent out into the open field around the meeting area so the meeting will not feel restricted.

Harry, Kayla, and Ginny showed up first dressed in the Patriots uniform accompanied by Tonks and Remus dressed in formal black robes. The Order showed up next with Dumbledore accompanied by McGonagall and Kingsley while dressed in the uniform for the Order of the Phoenix. The Order's uniform was a light blue trimmed in white with a screaming attacking phoenix on their cloaks in white. The name of the person wearing the uniform was on the back above the screaming phoenix. The centaurs arrived next dressed in camouflage that covered most of their body to blend in with the forest. The house elves showed up shortly after the centaurs with all of them very well dressed and clean all of which wearing completely white outfits. The ministry showed up next led in by Arthur Weasley with all of them dressed in formal robes. The last group to show up was the goblins with the head goblin dressed in an all gold outfit and his head assistant in silver with the last one dressed in bronze.

Harry spoke up first and said "I want to welcome everybody to this meeting to discuss an alliance to fight against Voldemort." Nobody shivered except for McGonagall, Kingsley, and the Ministry, which did not reflect well on them with all the other groups gathered.

Houseman spoke up first and said "Harry Potter, it is to my understanding that you are not on good terms with the Ministry and the Order of the Phoenix." Harry nodded and he continued to say "Why is it that you wish to allow them to participate in this treaty?"

Harry said "Please everybody call me Harry, just Harry. Although I am not on good terms with the Ministry and the Order, they both negotiated a chance to voice their opinions here today because I am unable to leave the school."

The magical creatures nodded their understanding and the head centaur Ronan said "Harry, I have no problems aligning myself with you or with the goblins and house elves because we were all treated poorly by the Ministry so I wish to discuss that first before we allow the Ministry or the Order to enter in our treaty."

Mr. Weasley stood up and said "My name is Arthur Weasley, the new Minister of Magic. I understand that all of you have been treated poorly by the Ministry and it is my wish to fix those problems. I offer our apologies for all the discrimination done in the past."

Alpha said "We have heard that rhetoric many times already and will address that after the goblins, centaurs, house elves, and Harry have addressed our terms to each other first."

Harry nodded his agreement and said "The Order of the Phoenix and the Ministry of Magic are to be excluded until the first treaty is set between the goblins, centaurs, house elves, and the group I'm associated with the Patriots. The Order and Ministry can witness the negotiations for the treaty but will not voice an opinion."

After all groups nodded their agreement with some hesitation from the Ministry and the Order, Harry asked "Who would like to start by stating their wishes dealing with guidelines of obligations to the alliance?"

Houseman said "If you all don't mind, I would like to express the wishes and offers of house elves but in general the elves as a group." After nobody objected, he continued on to say "The elves would like for equal representation in this group and for members of this group to help protect the rights of house elves in particular in reference to wizards. We just ask that house elves no longer be mistreated and acknowledge that our elves desire to continue to work for wizards but not to be persecuted and executed by wizards at their leisure

anymore. A house elf should receive equal judicial protection before being executed and tortured. We did not interfere in political matters before but wizards in particular the pure bloods under Voldemort are getting out of hand. We ask that they be permitted to leave those houses of service and enter another one of their choosing."

Harry asked "If they were to go to another house, would that pose a security concern for any groups involved?"

Houseman said "No that will not be a problem. They will be bound by the same order of secrecy and obedience to their new masters. They are unable to leave now because of an old form of magic performed by pureblood wizards that bind them to their respective households. What was unknown until recently was that if another wizard deemed to be worthy by the Alliance of Elves then house elves can switch their lineage over to that person only if he agrees. This can only be done once every one hundred years. We have also secretly contacted the house elves being mistreated and all have come to the same conclusion. They agree that Harry, you are an honorable man and based on Dobby would like to be bound to you not as free elves. We ask that you defend them should the time come and allow them to bind themselves in service to the Potter family."

Harry said "I don't wish to be anyone's master. I only wish to be part of a family and care for my friends. I will be honored to have those elves bind themselves to me. I would have defended the house elves even if they were not in service to me. I promise to protect and treat the house elves with dignity and respect."

Houseman said "Thank Harry. We will perform the bonding ceremony later after the meeting. In return, we promise to protect you and your loved ones in this war. We also pledge the defense divisions which are the strike elves in this war to you. There are approximately three hundred house elves ready to fight on your command."

Harry replied, "Thank you for your commitment to this war effort. I in turn pledge to do all I can to help the house elves."

Houseman nodded his approval and sat back down. After a short silence the Ronan from the centaurs said "The centaurs express

similar wishes as the house elves. Our terms are different and ask that you help defend the centaurs politically and physically, in turn we pledge our loyalty to you in this war. Since you have allied yourselves with the elves, we will also pledge protection to the elves."

Harry said "In return for the centaurs' aid, I will provide all the help I can provide to you as an individual and on behalf of the Patriots. I hope that this satisfy you?"

Ronan said "It is acceptable."

Houseman said "The elves will protect the centaur nation also."

Ronan replied "The centaurs will protect house elves in return."

The three groups nodded and Alpha stood up. Alpha said "We ask for political and physical protection also similar to that of the centaurs just asked. We offer the services of those in our banking industry and our own military. The Goblin's and Wizard's have had a dark history and we don't desire to repeat another Wizard and Goblin war."

Harry replied "I offer you the same in all the aid that I can provide along with the aid of the allies. Are we all in agreement that we will all defend each other both physically and politically?"

All the groups nodded their agreement to the terms. Harry asked "In the future, the possibility for conflicts of interest will arise in our group. How will we handle disputes among members of our group?"

Alpha said "I propose an alliance where each of us will have three members representing each group. Each member will be given a single vote and will be allowed to vote how he or she wishes without fear of persecution in this assembly. The majority will rule and a meeting can be called to assemble this alliance whenever there is a threat to any group or disagreements between the groups. A meeting can be called by a president to be elected by us as a group based on majority and the president will remain so until removed by a 2/3 vote of no confidence. By the end of this war, we will meet again to change how this group functions and organized or to disband this alliance. Since the president will have authority then that group will

lose his power to vote. Also a 2/3 vote can over rule anything the president decides to do. If there are any changes to be made to the group then we will vote on a 2/3 majority. Is that agreeable to the group?"

Everybody agreed to this and Harry was elected as the leader shortly after because he was the one with the most experience in fighting against Voldemort and all members knew that they could trust him to be fair. Harry hesitantly agreed to this and the group decided that they were to be called, The Alliance of Magic or the Alliance for short. After a few more details to be ironed out like Harry will have advisors. One person from each group will serve as the liaison for the respective groups. After the details were completed the Alliance decided to let the Ministry and Order participate in the meeting.

The Ministry and Order were listening in on the meeting and two thoughts were running in the group. Mr. Weasley realized that the Ministry has wronged the magical community for too long and to exclude the Ministry from such talks while placing the political burdens on a sixteen year old teenager that has only been a member of the magical community for six years. Dumbledore saw more of his control slip and new how much the magical world depended on house elves and goblins. He knew that Harry would not try to use the power maliciously but didn't like the idea that Harry was holding so much power.

Dumbledore was the first to speak up when he was allowed and said "I'm not sure if this alliance would be best placed in the hands of student."

Alpha said "If you do not believe that Harry can handle it then who do you believe will be better suited to lead the Alliance?"

Dumbledore replied "I believe that it would be best placed in those that are more familiar with leadership responsibilities on a grander scale and somebody who is older and knows more about strategy like the Minister of Magic or me."

Ronan said "We have placed our trusts many times in both of you but you both failed to look out for our interests for how many years, and

this sixteen year old kid who is now the President of The Alliance of Magic, managed to promote more change or push the people in the direction of change more than both of you combined.”

Houseman said “The compassion he expresses to all those around him is unmatched by any other wizard or witch with the possible exception of the two witches at his side right now. Since the beginning when he realized what house elves were, he took it upon himself to care for Dobby even when the house elf took the wrong path in protecting Harry.”

Dumbledore sighed and said “I understand your reasoning but we urge that you reconsider. With Mr. Potter’s help we will be able to help you just as much.”

Alpha said “You speak as if you are part of the Alliance.”

Mr. Weasley stepped in and said “I speak on behalf of the Ministry and wish to join the Alliance.”

Kayla spoke up and said “Mr. Weasley, you do know that if you join the Alliance then you will be placing your Aurors under Harry’s command.”

Mr. Weasley said “I ask to join the Alliance but can not give up control of the Ministry or its Aurors over to someone else. I can only join and offer non classified intelligence and offer the Ministry opinion by voting and as a member of the Advisory group to Harry.”

Ronan said “I don’t believe that that would be good enough. Right now, we don’t have enough trust in the Ministry to form an alliance with you all.”

Harry said “I’m sorry Mr. Weasley but I can not allow the Ministry of Magic to join The Alliance of Magic. There may be times when our interests or should I say missions will overlap and will need to work with one another but that can only be judged on a case by case basis. The Ministry has done nothing to make us feel any safer or trust the Ministry.”

Mr. Weasley said "Harry, I know that you know that you can trust me."

Harry replied "I'm not too sure about that. I'm sorry to say that Mr. Weasley but your close tie with your Order kind of clouds my judgment on that issue and the only person that I truly trust in your family is Ginny. I also know that it will not be easy to gain her trust also because she feels that when the Order betrayed me they also betrayed her at the same time especially with Professor Dumbledore's little obliterating trick of his."

Mr. Weasley responded "I understand Harry. I'm not too sure of what I will be able to do but I will do what I can to gain your trust again."

Harry nodded and Professor Dumbledore said "Am I safe to assume that the Order of the Phoenix will not be allowed to enter the Alliance either?"

Harry looked at all the members of the Alliance then he said "I'm sorry Professor but the Order of the Phoenix will not be allowed to join the group. As I said to Minister Weasley, there may be an occasion when we run a mission together that will require help on both sides but that will be judged on a case by case basis."

Harry paused a moment to let the message settle into both the Ministry and the Order then said "If the Order and Ministry will please leave so the Alliance can discuss some other business."

The two groups reluctantly left and once they left, Harry placed the strongest privacy charms on the tent so nobody could listen in on the meeting. The liaison members were decided and methods of communication were discussed. This was where Harry added an extra feature to his watch, along with Ginny and Kayla's watch which gives a small sliding mirror that remains attached to the watch. It would appear cosmetic but it was really a two way mirror similar to the one that Ginny and Harry used. Harry gave all the other delegates a watch including Remus and Tonks who would be allowed to be members with no voting powers but only as advisors.

The members also decided to have a strike force of a minimum of twenty-five ready to be sent out at a moments notice. The goblins and

elves agreed to be the strike force with rotating shifts every week. The centaurs were out because they were pretty much confined to the forests and the Patriots were confined to Hogwarts. The commander of the strike force would also receive a watch and the watch would be handed off to the next commander in the rotation. This was setup so that Harry can send out a strike team as quickly as possible until help could arrive.

A network of spies were also setup mainly composed of centaurs with respect to the forest, the Patriots with respect to the spies in Slytherin, and the house elves with respect to their master's homes. Since the centaurs, goblins, and house elves already knew about Potter Mansion, the command center for the War was going to be setup there until a new place could be settled.

After the meeting, Houseman performed the bonding ceremony which took about fifteen minutes. He bonded approximately fifty house elves to Harry. When Harry agreed, he didn't realize that there were going to be so many house elves joining him and had problems at first determining what to do. The elves stayed under the tent to await his orders and after consulting with the house elf advisor and with Kayla, Ginny, Remus, and Tonks, it was decided that twenty five elves will go to Grimmauld Place and help guard the headquarters to the Order of the Phoenix. Twenty elves will go to Potter Mansion and help care for the estate and its security. Five house elves will stay with Harry in both Harry's and Ginny's trunk to have a fast and dependable method for transferring messages.

After every delegate left, Harry banished the tent and headed back up to the castle. They didn't realize that they were in the tent for so long that it was already dinner time. The group changed back into their Hogwarts uniform and made their way to the Great Hall for dinner. At the Head Table were Dumbledore and McGonagall didn't look happy and that was due to the Order being evicted from a powerful alliance. The Patriots in general knew about the meeting and were receiving a summary through their watches about who they were now allied with and their new roles.

The next day there was a loud commotion in the Great Hall when the Daily Prophet arrived that morning. The trio was confused when they

arrived about all of the noise which was generated by mostly Slytherin students with Pureblood backgrounds. Harry was given a copy of the Daily Prophet by Susan Bones.

House Elves Abandon Post

By Georgia Willow

For unknown reasons yesterday evening, approximately fifty house elves abandoned their posts. Most of the house elves belonged to influential pureblood families. This has caused a panic in other families who are afraid of losing their house elves and vital facilities like St. Mungos and the Ministry of Magic. The Minister was quoted saying, "There is no need to panic. Based on the information that the Ministry has received, the house elves that have left their posts were leaving from abusive houses and have bonded with another wizard."

The question now becomes who was it that the house elves have bonded with and how many more house elves will abandon their posts in the near future. We at the Daily Prophet believe that although a house elf is technically a slave to their master, they should still be treated with respect. It is a good thing that the house elves at the Daily Prophet have been receiving better treatment ever since new initiatives started by Harry Potter at the beginning of last summer in his campaign for magical equality.

When Harry finished reading the article the bickering between Hermione and Ron could be heard going at full force. Hermione was arguing that this proved that house elves wanted to be freed but Ron was saying that they did not want to be freed; they just wanted to be a slave to somebody who treated them better. Most of the school was used to this happening and ignored the two of them when they fought.

After breakfast, the trio was leaving to go to class when across from the Great Hall the annoying voice of a familiar Slytherin yelled "Potter! I know that you were responsible for this."

This quieted the Great Hall down and attracted the attention of everybody including the staff who made no move to stop the fight that

was about to break out. Harry said “It’s not my fault if your house elves can’t stand your slimy ass.”

Malfoy made his way over to Harry and yelled “You will treat me with respect or you’ll be handled just like that mudblood mother of yours!”

Harry responded in a calm cold voice “Just the thought of my mother is more than you are allowed to do. You would do better not to mess with the big boys or you might find yourself in some kind of fatal accident.”

Malfoy was taken back for a moment but since the teachers were there he sneered and said “Do you honestly think that I’m afraid of you Potter?”

Harry said “I don’t think. I know... Your dear Head of House doesn’t dare stand in my way nor does your pansy of a master whose men parade around wearing white masks.”

Malfoy said “Don’t dare insult Slytherin house or I’ll just have to teach you a lesson.”

Harry replied with a smile “Really? I always wondered what kind of punishment a Slytherin can do considering all they ever do is run to their daddies or kiss the hem of a half blood. The half breed tyrant that can’t beat a one year old baby not to mention a sixteen year old man that is now ready to fight back.”

Malfoy pulled out his wand and pointed it at Harry who didn’t even bother to pull out his wand. The two of them were pretty much face to face but at arm’s length. Snape was looking on with glee that Potter was going to be taught a lesson. McGonagall wanted to say something but Dumbledore was holding her and the rest of the staff back from saying anything. Dumbledore was thinking, if Harry gets beat then he might concede that he isn’t as invincible as he thought. Dumbledore was also gambling that Malfoy wasn’t going to use anything too harmful and probably won’t considering all the students and teachers watching.

Harry found that it was interesting that none of the professors came to his aid. He motioned for Ginny and Kayla to lower their wands which they reluctantly did. Remus and Tonks were livid with Dumbledore and were making their way down to Harry. Malfoy thought that Harry was conceding that's why Harry told his two friends to lower their wands. Malfoy said "So you're finally learning Potty. You now know that you're no match for me." He continued to give a look of triumph.

Harry yawned then said "You didn't win anything Malfoy. Considering that none of the professors here are stepping in on what is happening, I guess I get the same free liberty with you." Harry said that loud enough so that everybody could hear.

Malfoy replied just as loudly "It would seem that way mutt. It just shows that the staff here wishes you were dead."

Harry said "I am inclined to think that also but I have a proposal. A duel between the two of us right now, there are no rules to the duel as anything goes and ends when one person is dead or begging for the other person to stop. We can start the duel just as we are standing right now. Do you agree?"

Malfoy couldn't believe what he was saying. Harry just consented to start a duel where anything goes and already has a wand pointed at him. Malfoy said "Agreed."

Ginny was watching with anticipation and so was Kayla. They were wondering what Harry had up his sleeve. Harry said "We can begin once you say start and make sure everybody hears it so that they all know not to interrupt a duel."

Harry made sure that they all heard what he said and knew that Malfoy would play along since he had the clear advantage. Malfoy yelled "Start!" He started to say "Redu..." but was cut off.

Harry had managed to spin his body to the left while using his right hand to grab Draco by his wand hand and pull him close. In the middle of his spinning, Harry managed to generate enough force to

flip Draco over onto the floor and make him loose his grip on his wand.

Harry pulled out his wand placed a silencing charm on Draco and kicked him in the stomach. While Draco was holding his stomach with all the expression of pain on his face, Harry walked over to pick up Draco's wand and waved it in front of the fallen Slytherin. He said mockingly and loudly "Look Draco. It's not a good thing to drop your wand in a duel. Did you know that I can snap your wand if I wanted to considering that this is an anything goes duel?"

Draco's eyes widened with fear as Harry held the wand in front of him just out of arm's length. Harry snapped the wand with one hand and tossed it into the air and shot two fire spells at it which lit both parts of the wand on fire. Harry then transfigured a large hanging bird cage in the center of the Great Hall. He slipped his wand back into his pocket and dragged Malfoy under the cage.

Harry said "There's one thing I have learned is that physical injury will heal but the emotional scars will always stay with you." He looked over at Snape and smiled at him when he did his next move. Harry pulled out his wand again and levitated Malfoy into the air and turned him upside down revealing his underwear which at the time was a pair of pink briefs.

Most of the students were laughing at Malfoy and most had a suspicion that he was wearing Pansy's knickers. Harry then made a sweeping move with his wand and Draco was now only wearing his pink underwear. Harry then levitated the boy into the cage and sealed it with the strongest spells that he could think of along with one special spell just in case all of his spells broke. There was a small swing in the cage that Harry placed him in and placed a sticking charm on his butt cheeks so that he wouldn't be able to get off the swing. For the final move, Harry set a permanent slow swinging charm on the swing to keep Draco swinging forwards and backwards while on the swing.

Snape was angry with Harry for the embarrassment that he caused to Malfoy and reminding him of the nightmare that Harry's dad did to Snape. Snape yelled "Potter, you will release Mr. Malfoy this instant!"

Harry turned to him and gave the man a look like he was stupid then said "This is a duel if you didn't realize. It's not my fault that the Prince of Slytherin is nothing more than a fraud which is probably why he's your favorite." Harry paused a moment then said, "I know that Malfoy hanging upside with his knickers showing reminded me of something but what was it. Do you know professor?" He asked the last point with a look of innocence.

Snape yelled "You will release him this moment as duels are not allowed in this school!"

Harry responded "The Headmaster himself didn't see fit to end this little argument that turned into a duel so now when it doesn't turn out the way you want, you want it to stop. How typical of a Slytherin to do something like that. I tell you what, if you can get Malfoy out of that cage in five minutes then this duel will end."

Snape was insulted by the challenge but didn't know of any other way out. Harry added at the end "If you fail to open it in five minutes then you will have to join Malfoy in the cage with your undergarments showing just like Malfoy."

Snape responded "If I can open the cage then you will have to let Mr. Malfoy out and be subject to what you just did to him."

Harry nodded and said "Your five minutes starts now."

Snape was muttering charms after charms trying to break all the spells that Harry placed on the cage. At the end of the first minute, Harry mockingly said "How disappointing for a professor not to be able to undo what a sixth year Gryffindor did."

Snape wanted to insult Harry but knew that he needed to get Draco out of that cage as quickly as possible. At the end of the second minute, Harry mockingly said "I guess the job requirements for a potions master at Hogwarts isn't much, considering you don't have to be able to teach or know how to do magic."

Snape turned his wand at Harry and said “Shut up Potter!” Harry just yawned at him and tapped his watch to remind Snape that the time was ticking away. Snape turned back to the task at hand.

At the end of the third minute Harry said “I guess Professor Flitwick is a better professor than I thought. He can teach and use magic better than you.” Professor Flitwick looked on with glee that his student was so proficient. Snape was starting to lose hope.

When the fourth minute rolled by Harry said “Look at the time. There’s only one minute left. Do you need some help Professor?” At the taunt, Snape started yelling all of the spells that he could think of hoping that the added energy would be enough to open the cage.

Harry started to count down near the end of the last minute “Five, four, three, two, one.” Harry shook his head as the potions master while Snape was lowering his wand in defeat. Harry said “That’s pretty pathetic that you couldn’t unlock a simple cage.”

Harry looked up to Professor Flitwick and mocked Snape while he asked, “Professor Flitwick, I think that I have it down now and correct me if I’m wrong but the wand movement is swish and flick. I believe the incantation is Wingardium Leviosa.”

Flitwick nodded as he wanted to bust with laughter. Harry did the levitation charm and the door to the cage lifted slightly before it opened up. Most of the students and a few of the teachers were trying to hold in their laughter at Harry’s taunting.

Dumbledore came to Snape’s rescue and said “That’s enough. Mr. Potter, you’ve had your fun for the day and now is time for class.”

Harry shook his head and said “Professor Snape failed to fulfill what he had agreed to do and now must suffer the consequences. I didn’t make him do it. It’s not my fault that he couldn’t do something as easily as open the door to a bird cage.”

Dumbledore responded “If you used some kind of unknown locking charm than it was an unfair challenge.”

Harry said "I can see your point in that but even that is up to debate because he shouldn't have taken the challenge if he couldn't finish it. All I did was lift the latch on the cage." He motioned to the latch on the now open cage door. The latch pushed the door down into a groove along the bird cage but when it was opened, the door would pop up and open.

Dumbledore sighed that something so simple was the answer to something that seemed so complicated. Harry was betting on the fact that Snape thought that he used every locking charm possible which paid off. Harry started to levitate a defeated Snape into the air. Dumbledore on the other hand lifted his wand to lower Snape.

Harry backed off and allowed for Snape to be lowered to the ground and the Headmaster and student stared at each other so intensely that their magical auras could be felt by everybody in the Great Hall. The sheer power was awe inspiring yet frightening if the two of them did release it and go head to head.

Harry decided that there was no purpose in challenging the Headmaster so he backed off much to the relief of all those gathered. He said "Since it was your potions master and your student that failed then I'll leave it up to you to clean up this mess." He then walked out of the hall followed by Ginny and Kayla who were laughing at Draco's shocked expression of not being let out of the cage. Most of the students made to follow and most of them also broke out laughing when they were out of view from the staff.

By lunch time had come around, Dumbledore had managed to undo all the transfigurations work and charms work that Harry had done to create the cage and protect the cage in the Great Hall. Although McGonagall was not pleased at Harry's blatant disrespect, she did admire his transfiguration ability and Flitwick admired his charms ability.

A/N: Thank you to my reviewers once again. Many have asked about Durmstrang and they will be making a return in the next chapter which should be out this weekend. I will try to continue to update twice a week but I guess that's not working out all too well right now so how about an average of 1.5 per week. This gives my betas time to edit and me time to write. Well, I hope you all enjoyed this chapter.

Chapter 32

The Second Challenge

Amid all the political chaos that was going on around Harry, the All-star team was still practicing for the second challenge that was coming up soon. The team has not been able to function as well as they did before the Christmas break because of the two major breaks in the team between Luna, Hermione, and Ron against Harry, Ginny, and Kayla. The rest of the team wasn't sure what to do so they decided to let the problem just play itself out.

Out of Ron's group, Ron was the only person playing. He played keeper for the team which in itself should not disturb the team too much because he was pretty much on his own just like Harry was on his own in the seeker position. The problem came in two forms, Ron believed that he had the most knowledge about Quidditch on the team and nobody challenged him on that but Ron thought that this automatically made him the captain so he bossed everybody around. This was fine with almost everybody on the team with the exception of Ginny who hated being told what to do. Although, everybody drew the line when Ron got out of control by demanding that people follow everything he said on the pitch.

The second problem added on to the first problem which was Hermione. She was taking an active role on the team although she was in no way going to play. Hermione started doing research on Quidditch strategy and wanted to take the role as the Coach on the team. Everybody knew about Hermione's research ability and agreed that it would be a good idea to have a coach on the sidelines to help guide the team. Hermione started to implement strategies that were so advanced that only the advanced Quidditch teams in the world used them but the Hogwarts team did not have the experience or the skill to pull off such complex plays. This upset her because it looked so easy to do on paper but performing it was another thing. The team was getting aggravated with her because she was pushing them too hard.

During practices, Harry would usually practice by himself trying to find the Snitch and running different patterns around the pitch to get reacquainted with his abilities and the limitations of his Firebolt. The

Chasers were being led by Ginny who usually ended up arguing with Ron and Hermione at the end of every practice with her trying to voice the team's dislike of how Ron and Hermione were leading the team. Everybody knew that at the rate the team was going, they were going to lose the second challenge for sure.

The week of the second challenge arrived and Durmstrang's team was set to practice on the Hogwarts field all week during the afternoon so that they could get comfortable with the Hogwarts Quidditch pitch. The first afternoon the two teams met with each other on the field for a friendly scrimmage game. Both teams knew that they were not going to show all of their abilities and game time strategy but felt the competition would better prepare them for the real game at the end of the week.

It turned out that Petia was going to play seeker opposite to Harry. Madame Hooch agreed to be the game official and most of the school turned out to watch the friendly match with the rest not wanting to spoil what they were going to see later that week. Once the quaffle was released, Ginny made a mad dash for the quaffle and got there first because of the speed of her F1. Ginny was soon flanked by Kayla and Susan who were going to help guard her while they headed to Durmstrang's side of the field. The bludger was flying towards Ginny then dove at the last moment where Terry was waiting and hit the bludger away towards Petia who was floating near mid field trying to search for the snitch.

Petia did not take the same approach to the game as most seekers did when playing against Harry. She was playing her own game just like Harry with the occasional glance at the other seeker just to make sure that they didn't miss something and the opposing seeker caught their mistake. Harry was floating near the Hogwarts side of the field and slowly getting higher each moment to get a better look of the field.

During Ginny's dive, she tossed the quaffle over to Susan who made for the right ring but passed to Kayla instead who scored in the left ring. The Hogwarts crowd cheered as their team scored the first goal making the score ten to nil. There was no announcer for this match so everybody had to keep their own score.

The Durmstrang chasers looked flawless in their play. They knew where each other were exactly on the field and made many passes without checking to make sure that somebody was there. They played in a spread formation with each chaser taking a slice of the field with the exception of the area in front of the rings. The Hogwarts team had a hard time keeping up with each chaser because when they bunched up or didn't stick to a chaser that they were supposed to cover, the quaffle would be passed and they would have to rush to cover where the quaffle went to.

This tired the Hogwarts team out quickly and left Ginny as the only person able to cover her target effectively enough to stop the all out assault from the Durmstrang chasers. In about half an hour into the game, Hogwarts was down 60 to 10. All the chasers knew that they were in trouble and if they were going to win then Harry better find that snitch quickly and catch it.

The Durmstrang beaters adopted the strategy of pressuring the chasers and completely ignore the seeker. They did not do this because they did not respect Harry's skills but had faith in Petia. Since this was a scrimmage game, the bludger was not aimed with dead accuracy capable by the beaters. They did hit it close enough to make the chasers panic a little or make some evasive maneuver which took them away from their target.

On the Hogwarts side, Ernie and Terry were playing the beater positions. At the start of the game, the strategy was to suppress Petia and distract her from searching for the snitch but that soon changed to slowing down the chasers so Kayla, Ginny, and Susan could keep up with the Durmstrang chasers. After giving up six goals, Ernie decided to fall back and help guard the rings with Terry flying with the chasers and deflecting the bludger from the witches.

With Ernie's help, Hogwarts only gave up two more goals and scored two more with another being scored by Kayla and one by Susan. The four goals were scored in a span of about another half an hour. Ginny was running interference to help clear the way for her teammates to score. Hermione was yelling commands in from the spectators' seat but most of which were ignored because they were too busy playing defensive strategies to prevent a humiliating defeat.

About an hour into the match, Harry spotted the snitch floating at ground level near mid field and dove for it. He was pushing his broom as fast as he could to get to the snitch because shortly after he spotted it, Petia also spotted the snitch. She was in a better position and brought her broom into a fast dive. The two of them were flying Firebolts so now it relied on who was the better flier.

During their dive, the snitch flew towards the Hogwarts side of the field so they both readjusted their course and were neck to neck when pulling out of their dives. They were now on a collision course with the ring posts but neither one of them was taking their eyes off of the snitch. Petia was slightly lighter than Harry and was able to pull a slight lead on Harry. This was all that was necessary because when both of them reached the snitch, Petia managed to grab one of the wings first and yank it towards her and pull to the left and skyward to avoid hitting the ring post. Harry turned sideways on his broom and flew between the right ring post and the middle post to avoid collision.

Petia was raising the snitch above her head when she pulled skyward and her team was cheering her on. The game ended 230 to 30 in favor of Durmstrang. Harry was shocked because he had never been beaten to the snitch when he had a chance at it. Ginny was just as surprised but held it in because she knew that he would be depressed about losing the snitch. The Hogwarts team in general was disappointed in themselves for being handed a humiliating defeat. The students that watched the match walked back with their heads down and many questioning if they should show up at the end of the week.

The two teams congratulated each other on a clean and well played match. The Durmstrang team practiced a little while longer by running some drills while the Hogwarts team went to the locker rooms depressed thinking that if Durmstrang was not playing as hard as they could today then on Saturday, it will be a massacre.

After the Quidditch match, a team meeting was called to be held in the Room of Requirement by Susan and Ernie. The only other people that seem to know what the meeting was going to be about were Michael and Terry but nobody was talking. Susan knew how to ask

for the room and how to get what she needed from the room because Harry had taught her earlier in the year.

The room was set up with three long tables set up in a ‘U’ formation. The two side tables had three chairs each and the center table had four chairs. The chairs were large and comfortable with the room in soft comforting colors. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla sat at one of the tables with three chairs with Ron, Hermione, and Luna sitting at the table opposite of them. The four left over sat at the middle table with Susan and Ernie sitting at the middle.

Susan said “Alright, I’m sure that most of you are wondering why Ernie and me called for this meeting. The first thing we need to talk about is what went wrong today during the Quidditch match and how we can address these problems. The second thing we need to talk about is the team chemistry and how we are falling apart.”

Ron said with an air of superiority “We would have won the game today if Harry wasn’t beaten to the snitch by that girl. If anything, Harry was not focusing on the match.”

Kayla heatedly responded “You should talk Ron. If it wasn’t for the help you were getting from the beaters, we would have been run into the ground much earlier in the game.”

Ernie interrupted the ensuing argument by saying “This was what Susan was talking about earlier. This team is falling apart and the main division can be seen where everybody is being seated. We could have performed much better today if we had worked as a team.”

Terry said “Without a doubt, Durmstrang is a good team. They would be difficult to beat even if we were all in our best form but we stand no chance at all with the break in this team.”

Hermione responded “Everybody knows why there is a separation on this team. The three of them” she was motioning to Harry, Ginny, and Kayla “refuse to listen to orders that I was telling them. If they would just listen then we would have a better chance of winning.”

Ginny responded “Why should we listen to you? Until this year, you had no interest in Quidditch and just because you read a few books about the game, it does not mean you know everything about it. If you think it is so easy to execute those professional plays then why don’t you get on a broom and do it yourself?”

Hermione said “I know that the plays are difficult to execute by there is no reason why you all could not pull it off. You just refuse to listen to me especially since Harry refuses to listen to what I say.”

Harry watched Hermione for a moment then said “I only follow commands that make sense. Why would I do trick plays when the other seeker is not paying attention to me? It’s stupid if I did and would only be risking myself needlessly.”

Luna in an airy voice responded “Why are you complaining about hurting yourself needlessly? It seems like you can’t get out of a real match without getting hurt anyway.”

Ginny shook her head while she said “Just because he gets hurt does not mean that he goes out and look for different ways to hurt himself. Anybody who plays Quidditch,” Ginny looked pointedly at Hermione, “Knows that part of a great game and part of a great player is when you put all your heat and emotions in to the game. Harry lets the game wrap him up and that is why he is a great seeker.”

Ron said “We all know how reckless Harry can get when he lets his emotions take over. That may make him a better player but that does not help the rest of us.”

Harry looked at Ron and heatedly said “I may be reckless when it comes to the game but I put my heart into it and do everything I can to win. Yes, I lost the snitch today but I’m not trying to weasel my way out of it. Ron, you’re the one trying to cast blame on someone else when something goes wrong. How did Durmstrang manage to score on you and don’t try to blame anybody else?”

Hermione interrupted them, while glaring at Harry; she said “Don’t try to blame Ron. He did all he could out there unlike you. At least Ron knows how to work as a team.”

Harry heatedly said "Of course Ron knows how to work as a team because that way he can blame someone else when something doesn't go his way."

Hermione angrily responded "You should talk Harry. You're the one that has become so arrogant that you turn on everybody that has watched out for you."

Kayla stood up, leaning against the table, and angrily said "You three," she was pointing to Hermione, Ron, and Luna "Know how to backstab people!"

Susan interrupted them by yelling "Enough! This is what the rest of the team thought was the problem. Hermione, Ron, Luna, Harry, Ginny, and Kayla, all six of you have been at each other's throat ever since you came back from the break. We know part of the story about how Hermione, Ron, and Luna were reporting Harry's activities to Dumbledore. This resulted in Harry, Ginny, and Kayla turning against Hermione, Ron, and Luna. Am I right?"

Harry turned to Susan saying "Yes, but there is more to that story. In summary though, that was the problem."

Ernie said "What we don't understand is how this ripped the close friendship between Harry, Hermione, and Ron apart?"

Kayla turned to Susan and Ernie when she said "There are many details being left out but Hermione, Luna, Ron, and Neville betrayed Harry. Harry saw them as his close friends but they turned on him and behind his back were reporting all his actions just because Dumbledore did not like how Harry was thinking for himself for once."

Hermione turned to Harry to say "We were just looking out for you Harry. Yes we did join the Order last year before our fifth year but it was necessary to make sure that you were safe. We didn't do this to hurt you."

Harry replied "I don't know where you all got the idea that I was trying to hide from the world after fourth year considering I was the one that

kept on asking on what was going on and sending updates about myself during that summer. It was you all that were withholding information from me. I always came to you and Ron in the past when I needed help and always thought that you were helping me because you were my friends but I guess that that was not true.”

Hermione said “Harry, we have always helped you since the beginning. We helped you out before Voldemort’s return and all the mess with the Order. Just think about all the adventures that we went through since first year through the fourth year.”

There was a long moment of silence as Harry was thinking over his first four years at Hogwarts. Harry startled everyone when he said out loud to no one in particular “I just realized something.” He looked over at Ron and said “You were always spying on me weren’t you. Since the beginning, you were the one that joined me in my train compartment after I met you all at platform 9 ¾. That’s not so awkward except your mum acted like she didn’t know which platform you were supposed to leave from. How is it that your mum didn’t know which platform considering she went to Hogwarts for seven years? That’s not mentioning all the times she took your brothers to the train station when they went to Hogwarts. She goes through that routine at least two times a year once to drop you all off for school and pick you all up from school. Hagrid had to leave early so he couldn’t escort me onto the platform but your mother conveniently walks by at that moment talking about muggles to catch my attention then ask what platform the Hogwarts Express was located at. I guess Dumbledore had you and most of your family following his orders ever since I came back into the Wizarding World. This added on to your jealousy streak makes you more determined to spy on me. Hermione, I think idolizes Dumbledore too much and will always follow him because of his legacy. She always did recommend that I go tell Dumbledore every little thing that happens.”

Susan said “Harry, are you trying to say that your friendship with Ron has always been a lie and Hermione was bound to betray you?”

Harry replied “You can ask the two of them,” he motioned over to Ron and Hermione.

Everybody turned to look at Ron and Hermione and the uncomfortable silence was broken by Ernie when he asked "Is it true? Is what Harry saying true?"

Ron never had enough sense to use tact so he lost his temper and yelled "That's right! The Great Harry Potter gets everything! He is rich and famous! He can shag any girl that he wants and to prove that point just look at how many knickers that are sent to him whenever he gets his name in the papers! It was my job to keep an eye on him and that was what I did! If anything," he looked at Harry "You should be thankful that I was there to keep you from getting killed!"

Everybody froze at Ron's response. They now knew that Ron was only using Harry and because of his feelings, he was always going to stay envious to Harry. Harry sighed in defeat. He knew that there was a possibility that Ron was using him all along but didn't really want to believe it. He was now hanging on to hope that Hermione was not using him all along also. Sure, Harry, Hermione, and Ron were not friends at the time but they always worked out their problems in the past and Harry wanted to be on better terms with his two former friends again but knew they needed time apart to sort through everything. Now the truth was coming out and he was both afraid and now hurt from what Ron just said. The three of them were best friends and Ron's words cut through Harry like being hit with a Crucio on the emotional level. Harry was afraid of what Hermione was going to say but it needed to be said so in a small barely audible voice he looked at Hermione and asked "Hermione? What about you?"

Hermione was also hurt from what Ron said and felt that her friendship with Ron was also false. She knew that Harry would never betray them and would stand by her even if it meant that he would die a gruesome and torturous death. Hermione looked up with watery eyes and said "Harry, you and Ron were my first true friends and we've been through so much that not many adults would be able to compare to the three of us. I know that you would willingly die for me and I would do it for you also. If I had to make that decision today I would do it even though we are on different sides on this war and not on the best of terms. Harry you were my best friend and hopefully one day we will get back to that relationship but right now I feel that Dumbledore is the right leader to follow."

Harry was in a daze from being rejected again but at least he knew that Hermione made her decision based on what she believed and did not use him in the past. She was persuaded by Dumbledore to go up against Harry and he resolved to try to renew his relationship with her later on when the war ends or when the threat associated with Harry dies down.

Terry asked "I don't want to seem unsympathetic and all but where does that leave us as a team?"

Ginny took Harry's hand to comfort him because she knew that Ron's words hurt him and she responded on behalf of Harry. She said "I think that since now everything is out in the open we can function better as a team without emotions and words being held back anymore. Whatever happens when we play Durmstrang again will happen and all the practice we do now until this Saturday won't matter. Let's just work on strategy here."

Kayla nodded and said "I think that the chasers are going to have to attack all day long and leave the beaters back with the keeper to help protect the rings. The chasers will fly with no protection and will need to communicate to each other when a bludger is heading their way. The seeker will need to occasionally run interference but needs to spend most of his time looking for the snitch because Petia is really good."

Nobody objected and everybody just wanted to get out of the room so everybody just nodded their agreement and the meeting was over. Most of the team left except for Harry, Ginny, and Kayla. The room changed to a large one room wood cabin with a large fireplace in the middle. There was a large comfortable sofa and two love seats on both sides of the sofa completing the square with the sofa and fireplace.

Ginny sat on Harry's lap and rested her head on his chest while Kayla looked on. Ginny asked "Are you alright?"

Harry nodded then said "Yeah, I just needed to think about a few things that's all."

Kayla asked "What are you thinking about?"

Harry said "Ron and Hermione."

Ginny said "I know that what Ron said hurt more than anything. The three of you have shared a lot of memories but one day things will get better. Hermione has always been your friend and will be again when this war is over and you two can finally sit down without the war dividing the two of you. I know that you and Hermione are still friends although you don't talk to each other. What I just said doesn't make sense when said out loud but you know what I mean."

Harry knew that Ginny was right and although he and Hermione were not on the best of terms they would risk everything for each other on the battlefield just like they would before all the drama happened. Harry gave a Ginny a kiss on the top of her head to thank her for comforting words. The trio spent the rest of the time in silence just thinking about the war, the friendships, and the Quidditch match on Saturday.

That week the team spent most of their time doing light physical practices to keep their abilities sharp but most of practice was dedicated to strategy and how to react to certain scenarios. Word got out around school about the new revelations about Harry, Hermione, and Ron's relationship. The school started to take things easier on Hermione and a few people started to talk to her again but Ron was shunned by almost everybody except for Luna, Neville, and Hermione who was trying to get Ron to see the errors of his way which erupted in a few more arguments between the two.

Saturday came around and the team was nervous about the game and hoped that it wouldn't be a total disaster like the scrimmage match. Everybody playing didn't eat very much that morning and breakfast was a large event with Durmstrang and Beauxbaton showing up to join in the meal and staying the day for the match. The Durmstrang students knew about the scrimmage match and were confident that they would easily defeat Hogwarts. The Hogwarts students were divided into two schools of thought. The first group had faith in their team that they learned from their mistakes during the

scrimmage match. The second group hoped that it would be a humiliating defeat.

Later that day, during the afternoon everybody from the three schools and a few special guests were on hand to watch the Quidditch match. The two teams were out on the Quidditch pitch with Susan shaking hands with the captain of the Durmstrang team. Headmistress Maxine from Beauxbaton served as the official for the match. She spoke in English because everybody on the teams understood English. She blew her whistle and the match was under way. The announcer was Gabrielle who is Fleur's little sister that Harry rescued during the Tri-wizard tournament. Her English was a little rough and her French accent evident in everything she said.

Susan and Kayla immediately shot across the field flying in various patterns near the Durmstrang rings which forced their chasers to fall back to cover the witches. Ernie and Terry pulled back towards the right and left rings respectively with Ron guarding the middle ring. Harry shot up as high as he could and then flew as fast as he could around the Quidditch Pitch which temporarily confused Petia who was wondering what he was doing.

Ginny went for the quaffle and got to it first. The Durmstrang beaters were hitting the bludger directly at her chest but she was extremely agile and her quick reflexes helped her avoid getting hit. Ginny flew as fast as she could for the middle ring and at the last minute faked a pass to Kayla who was cutting across the right ring which distracted the Durmstrang keeper long enough so that Ginny was able to throw the quaffle into the left ring and score the first points making the score ten to nil in favor of Hogwarts. The Hogwarts crowd exploded with cheers for Ginny.

When Durmstrang received the quaffle next, Kayla and Susan stayed about midfield to prepare for a quick counter attack while Ginny and her fast broom pulled back to a defensive posture. Durmstrang had a difficult time scoring at first because there was a person protecting each ring. After a quick change in strategy, they decided to fly in a 'V' formation with the two outside flyers heading on a collision course with two of the possible rings to score from. At first Ron, Terry, and Ernie would stand their ground but after a few bludgers flying their

way along with some extremely close near misses at high speeds, they started to crack and the defense fell. This resulted in a tie game of ten to ten.

After Durmstrang scored, Petia went for a quick dive towards the area underneath Harry. Harry panicked and thought she saw the snitch so he went for a vertical dive. About half way down, he realized that she was trying to trick him and pulled out of the fast dive while a bludger slammed into his left hand and broke his wrist. He signaled for the team to continue to play while trying to hold in the pain but most of the team can tell that he was in extreme pain including a few spectators that were near him.

Harry was flying with only one hand on the broom as he circled the pitch to try to take his attention off the pain from his wrist. While that was going on, Susan managed to sneak behind the Durmstrang defense and scored when Kayla passed the rings up at full speed and passed it back to Ginny just as she passed the rings. Ginny was in a vertical rise at high speed which threw the keeper off and pulled him away from the rings. She was about to score but dropped the quaffle as Susan was flying straight for the rings. Susan caught the dropped quaffle and scored.

The score was twenty to ten in favor of Hogwarts. Durmstrang launched a series of quick strikes afterwards with the aid of the bludgers. The bludgers were aimed directly at the beaters on the Hogwarts side which resulted in what looked like a tennis match. Terry and Ernie were not in nearly as good shape as the two beaters from Durmstrang and wore their arms out quickly.

With Ernie and Terry worn out to the point that they could barely hold their clubs, the Hogwarts team was without protection from the bludgers. Durmstrang turned the bludgers on Ginny and spent most of her time dodging the bludgers which meant that there was close to no defense left for the rings especially since Ron was not doing so well under the pressure given Ernie and Terry were now drawn away from the rings and trying to rest their arms just enough to get back into the game to be somewhat productive.

The chasers for Durmstrang were merciless as they continually dove at Ron and after the third score in a row, Kayla and Susan were forced to pull back and play purely defensive roles. With Ginny being constantly distracted with the bludgers and Kayla and Susan playing defensive positions, Hogwarts didn't stand a chance anymore. When Susan and Kayla pulled back to defensive positions, Terry and Ernie were being substituted by Luna and Michael which wasn't much help. The only positive thing about Luna and Michael joining the game was that their arms were not feeling like rubber. Michael assisted Ron with the rings while Luna flew with Ginny to provide her with some protection.

The game was going on for about an hour now and the score was 100 to 20 in favor of Durmstrang. The feeling of *déjà vu* was going through the Hogwarts team and the Hogwarts students that witnessed the scrimmage game. The Durmstrang students were still cheering on their team with all their might while Beauxbaton was divided between cheering for Durmstrang which was clearly the better team and loyalty to Harry and the Hogwarts team because Harry saved one of their classmates a few years back.

At about seventy-five minutes, Harry spotted the snitch heading towards him but in horizontal flight going across the pitch. Harry was too high in the air and would require a vertical drop. Petia was out of position and would take longer to get to the snitch so she motioned for her beaters to turn the bludgers on Harry. Harry pushed his broom as fast as he could on a vertical drop with Petia going as fast as she could on an intercept course.

Harry was oblivious to the bludger heading his way and when he made it half way to the snitch, the bludger slammed into him and with his broken wrist, Harry was in the dive with only one hand on the broom. The impact was strong enough to throw Harry off his broom. The crowd shrieked at the site of Harry being hit in his right shoulder with bludger and only got louder as they saw him get separated from his broom at 100 feet in the air.

Harry was disoriented for a moment and was spinning wildly in the air. Harry held out his right hand and grimaced at the pain in his shoulder and yelled, "Accio Firebolt!" The Firebolt which was still on course in

a vertical dive abruptly stopped and flew towards Harry as fast as the broom could. In mid spin, Harry saw the Firebolt speed towards him and managed to slow the spin just enough to grab the Firebolt, mount it, take control, and fly. When he managed to take control, Harry was about ten feet off the ground.

Lucky for Harry, the snitch made a quick change in its direction and floated towards Harry. Petia quickly corrected her flight direction and flew towards where the snitch was heading. Harry focused as hard as he could on the snitch and reached the snitch while it was five feet off of the ground. Harry reached for the snitch with his left hand and yelled out a scream of pain as he grabbed the snitch and pulled it in towards him.

Petia was flying with tunnel vision at the time and reached the snitch just seconds after Harry but the two of them were flying at top speed. Harry was in too much pain to react quickly enough but Petia was using her quick reflexes to pull out after Harry took hold of the snitch. The problem was that Petia did not pull out quick enough and hit Harry in the head with her feet as she tried to avoid an accident.

This threw Harry off his broom again and landed hard on the ground. Gabrielle was yelling out Hogwarts victory until she saw Harry slam into the ground. The Hogwarts crowd was cheering and the stadium quieted down once they saw the collision in the air. The Hogwarts team minus Ron rushed down to check on Harry. Hermione was rushing down from her seat in the stands followed by Remus and Tonks. Madame Maxine was calling for the stretcher for Harry.

Ginny got to Harry first and she was yelling and sobbing, "Harry, are you fine? Speak to me Harry? Come on, you'll be fine."

Harry was barely audible when he said, "Ginny, take care of everything because I don't know how long I can stay awake."

Ginny nodded and took his right hand without lifting it because she knew of where Harry was hit by the bludger both times. Ginny whispered to Harry, "Go back to Potter Mansion where you'll be safe. I'll go find you shortly afterwards."

Harry nodded and whispered, "Home to the Phoenix," and with that he disappeared and reappeared in the infirmary of Potter Mansion. Shortly after arrival, the house elves were working on Harry.

Kayla came up to Ginny and asked, "Where did Harry go?"

Ginny gave her a look and Kayla knew that he went back home. Ginny said, "I need you to cover for us here and act like you don't know where we went, I'm going to go be with Harry." With that she rushed back to Gryffindor tower and snuck into her trunk just to make sure she was alone and used her portkey to get to Harry. Ginny stayed with Harry the entire time he was recovering but stayed out of the way as the house elves worked on healing Harry.

The crowds shrieked again and chaos broke out when they saw Harry disappear. Kayla ran damage control while Ginny left. The Order sent out search parties but had a feeling that he headed back to Potter Mansion but since they couldn't get in there they resigned to searching around Hogwarts and having a person wait at Grimmauld Place.

There was a small party that night to celebrate Hogwarts victory which had both Durmstrang and Beauxbaton present. The party ended early that evening and everybody went back to their respective dormitories or school. In the challenge between Hogwarts and Durmstrang, Hogwarts is now in the lead one to nothing with a tie.

A/N: Thank you to my reviewers. To clarify something, I was not trying to imply in this chapter that Ron was a bad keeper just that Durmstrang is that much better than Hogwarts and Hogwarts only won by luck. To respond to a few reviewers...

In the previous chapter, one of the criticisms was that I made Snape seem incompetent but in reality I just had Snape unable to solve a riddle or in his case didn't realize that there was a riddle to solve in order to open the cage. I took it from when I visited Ripley's Believe It or Not in New Orleans where there was a gate that had no lock but couldn't be opened unless you pushed down one of the support beams. If it would have been Dumbledore he wouldn't have been able to open it either. That also goes for Harry if he wasn't the one

that placed that charm on the cage for the door to be lifted in order for it to open then he wouldn't have been able to open it in five minutes either.

My true intentions for Hermione are showing now. In the past people criticized that I made Hermione seem clueless and weak but in reality I have her following her convictions just like Ginny did when she followed Harry. They just happened to end up on opposite sides. Just like in any major political issue in the real world, not everybody agrees on what is right and what is wrong and that is what is going on here.

Chapter 33

A Pink Dress and Four Purple Dresses

When Harry arrived at Potter Mansion, he was already unconscious. Ray and Rain took charge of taking care of Harry while Dobby and Winky were on patrol at Grimmauld Place. The house elves that Harry sent to stay at Potter Mansion were shocked to see their new master looking all worn and beaten. Rain was pouring potions after potions down Harry's mouth to take care of all of his internal bleeding, broken bones, and dislocated joints. Ginny showed up for moral support and didn't get involved because she knew that Ray and Rain knew what they were doing, and have taken care of Harry many times before when he was injured over the summer during his intensive training. The new house elves were unfamiliar with Ginny's relationship with Harry and were about to push her out of the infirmary, but Ray informed the other elves on Harry and Ginny's relationship.

That night, after all the potions were doing their respective jobs on Harry, Ginny expanded Harry's bed and slipped under the covers with him. The two had a fairly peaceful night especially since Harry was forced to take a dreamless sleep potion to help his body recover faster. It took Harry two days to recover from all of his injuries and it was time for him to return to Hogwarts.

Harry went ahead first again and Ginny followed shortly afterwards again so she could reset her portkey to return to Potter Mansion in an emergency. Harry used his portkey to return to his trunk which was securely locked upon his departure which was a security precaution that Harry had installed on the trunk. Only Ginny and Kayla had access to Harry's trunk now since Harry removed everybody else's access to the trunk. Kayla was in his library when they returned.

Kayla jumped up from her seat, ran over to Harry, hugged him, checked him over for injuries, and said "How are you Harry? Are you doing better? Of course you're doing better, if you weren't you wouldn't be here. Just listen to me rambling on and on. Well, how are you?"

Harry smiled at Kayla's concern then replied "I'm fine Kayla. It took a little while to heal but I'm all better. How have you been?"

Kayla saw Ginny come in and ran over to her and the two girls hugged and greeted each other. Kayla turned back to Harry and said, "Everything has been as good as expected I guess considering you disappeared and many of the students and teachers were panicking but its better now I guess."

Ginny asked Kayla, "What about you?"

Kayla said "I was worried sick at first but after the shock wore off, I realized that Harry would be well taken care of. I can tell you two this though; you both are in serious trouble for disappearing like that. Dumbledore and the Order have been trying to push me for information, but I haven't told them anything other then 'I know that Harry's safe and being well taken care of.'"

Harry said "Well, I guess we should go to dinner to let them all know that we're fine."

Ginny and Kayla nodded and followed Harry. Harry was a few steps ahead of the girls. The two witches were discussing the extent of Harry's injuries and what the house elves did to heal him. When they reached the Great Hall, the three of them were late for dinner and as usual upon their entrance, the students quieted down and everybody were staring at the trio.

The three of them acted like nothing had happened and made their way to their usual seats and started to eat. Soon afterwards, the noise level picked up again and a few students visited Harry to make sure that he was fine. When dinner was nearly over, McGonagall approached Harry and told him "Mr. Potter, Professor Dumbledore asks that when you're done with your dinner then please meet him in his office."

Harry replied "Yes ma'am." He looked towards the head table and saw that Dumbledore was already making his way out of the Great Hall followed by a few members of the Order along with Ron and Hermione.

McGonagall stared expectantly at Harry and when he didn't respond she asked "Are you going Mr. Potter?"

Harry wasn't able to eat very much all dinner because of all the people visiting him and he was hungry so he was still eating when McGonagall was waiting idly next to him. After McGonagall spoke, he said "I'm not done with dinner yet. I'll be there when I'm done."

McGonagall wasn't pleased that Harry didn't leave immediately but understood that he hasn't had much time to eat. She left the trio behind and headed off to Dumbledore's office. Shortly after finishing their meals, Harry made his way to Dumbledore's office accompanied by Ginny and Kayla. When the three of them made it to the gargoyles guarding the Headmaster's office, the staircase was sealed and the password was needed to enter.

Harry said "They want to meet with us, but they don't give us the password or leave the staircase open for us to enter, and they claim that I don't think about what I do."

Ginny nodded and asked "What do you think we should do?"

Kayla replied "Well, I'm not in any rush to talk to them because I've already heard enough from them over the last few days. I say we just wait here for them to come down and open up the stairs for us to enter."

Harry and Ginny nodded and the three of them sat down across the hall from the gargoyles. Harry pulled out a deck of cards and the three of them were playing different card games from poker to blackjack as they waited for somebody to come down and let them into the office.

About 20 minutes later the gargoyles parted and the staircase started to move to allow passage into the Headmaster's office. McGonagall was making her way down and when she saw the trio sitting there playing cards, she asked in a stern voice "What are you three doing? We've been waiting in the Headmaster's office for some time now."

Harry picked up the cards while Ginny replied "Professor, when we got to the stairs the staircase was closed and we didn't have the passwords. It's not our fault that we weren't given the password."

McGonagall wanted to say something but Kayla said "Let's not keep the headmaster waiting any longer."

The three of them accompanied McGonagall up the staircase and into the Headmaster's office where the members of the Order that was positioned at Hogwarts were all gathered. Snape sneered at the three new arrivals and arrogantly said "We've been waiting for you three for some time now. My time is better used than waiting around for you three brats so you all better have a good excuse for what you all pulled. That will be ten points each from Gryffindor for making me wait."

Ginny pulled out a small muggle notepad, checked her watch, and started to write something in her notepad. Dumbledore asked "Miss Weasley, may I be so bold as to ask what it is that you are writing?"

Ginny finished her writing then placed the notepad back in her pocket and responded "The three of us decided a while back that since the school seems to like to overlook the mistreatment of students by certain professors" that's when she looked at Snape "We have decided to make a note of all of his actions that we feel are inappropriate and at some point in the future will use it as evidence when we bring him on charges of prejudice and misuse of power before the Board of Governors."

Dumbledore replied "Miss Weasley, I don't believe that was necessary. After all what happened just now was appropriate considering how long everybody here has been waiting and Professor McGonagall had to come fetch you along with Mr. Potter and Miss Rapp."

Kayla replied "It's not our fault that we weren't given the password, you didn't leave the staircase open so we could easily enter without a password, or have somebody waiting that knew that password to escort us up here. Since we didn't have the password and no

accommodations where made for us just now, we had no choice but to wait until somebody came down the stairs.”

Snape sneered “What was to stop you from guessing the password? It does not take a genius to figure out that it is usually some type of candy or snack. Potter has done this before in the past.”

Harry gave Snape a big grin when he said “I didn’t want to compromise the security of the Headmaster’s office by guessing at a password. Who knows how many people could have overheard the password being given. I thought that since you were a spy that you would understand the word security.” Harry said the word ‘security’ really slowly like he wasn’t sure if Snape heard of that word before.

Snape was livid with the blatant disrespect and said “Potter, you’re no longer in that rat hole that you call a home anymore. Here you will give me the respect that I deserve.”

Harry continued with the grin and said “You’ve been in my home? I guess the security measures there were not as good as I thought. I must check on that. I hope that you’re not talking about Grimmauld Place as being my home because you’re sorely wrong but then you do tend to be wrong when it comes to me. Anyway, I do agree that you should get the respect that you deserve which I believe is none considering you still haven’t given me an ounce of respect since I’ve stepped foot into Hogwarts Castle.”

Snape replied in a triumphant voice “That will be fifty points off of Gryffindor for blatant disrespect of a professor.”

Harry turned to Ginny with a confused expression and asked “Gin, doesn’t the title professor usually means that that person imparts knowledge to a student?”

Ginny replied “That’s my understanding Harry. Why do you ask?”

Harry pointed to Snape and said “But he keeps on calling himself a professor but nobody seems to have learned anything from him. Yet, he still calls himself a professor.”

Ginny and Harry were in their own world as they played out their mocking of Snape. She made a face like she was thinking then said "You know Harry, maybe he was doing what muggles call performance theatre and his role is a professor." She turned to Snape and said "Just in case you don't know, performance theatre is acting."

Snape was livid and he said "That will be fifty points from Gryffindor for disrespectful behavior towards a professor Miss Weasley."

Kayla raised her hand and was hoping up and down in excitement. Dumbledore asked Kayla "Do you want to say something Miss Rapp? It's not necessary to raise your hand in this office."

Kayla was acting like a child when she said in a childish voice "Oh, can you take fifty points off of me also? I hate it when my friends do something and I don't get to join in!" She made a puppy face at the end.

Harry, Ginny, and Kayla were getting glares from Ron, Hermione, and McGonagall for losing so many points from Gryffindor. Tonks and Remus were trying to hold in their laughter at the antics the trio was playing. McGonagall said in a stern voice "Mr. Potter, Miss Weasley, and Miss Rapp, stop acting like children and losing points for Gryffindor on purpose."

Harry replied "We only act like children because we are treated like children. We also don't really care about losing points, considering it is really a stupid system of awarding and taking away points, because all it does is to promote conflict between the competing groups, and in this case it's the different houses. We've fought Death eaters many times and Voldemort a few times. Do you believe that we really care about some useless point system just so the winner gets to hold a trophy for a year? If that is the case then many people here have their priorities a little mixed up."

Dumbledore sighed and said "We're getting off the subject here. All the points taken off for not showing up on time will be restored. Now, Mr. Potter, Miss Weasley, will you please tell me where the two of you have been for the last few days?"

Harry said "I went back into hiding so I could properly heal myself. Ginny came along to make sure that I was fine, if anything would have gone wrong then she would have let you all know."

Dumbledore replied "Did you return to...?"

He was cut off by Harry who raised his hands to silence the Headmaster and silently cast a silencing spell on him. Ginny took that as her cue to mutter a few detection spells in the room. After a few things stayed glowing, Harry copied it and summoned them to him and burned the copied item. With a wave of his hand, the silencing spell was taken off of Dumbledore and Harry said "I'm sorry about that Headmaster but I couldn't allow you to say the name of the place I went to out loud especially since Ginny, Kayla, or me haven't checked the room for any listening devices or charmed objects used for eavesdropping."

Dumbledore replied "It is understandable Mr. Potter, am I safe in assuming that what you just burned were objects that were charmed to eavesdrop in on conversations in this office?"

Harry replied "Yes sir. I tend not to be as trustworthy as I used to be given all the situations that have occurred over the last few weeks." He paused a moment then said "Let's just say that I went home for a few days where I was safe."

Dumbledore nodded and said "You could have done that here Harry. You of all people know that you could trust Madame Pomfrey to take good care of you."

Harry nodded and said "Yes, I do trust Madame Pomfrey with my care because she could have harmed me many times in the past already. It's not that I don't trust her but the security in this castle. As you all just witnessed, even the Headmasters office is not as secure as you all thought. I don't know if the Headmaster left that here to keep an eye out for his office which is understandable but from his reaction, Professor Dumbledore didn't seem to know that there was a spy in his office."

Dumbledore replied "Mr. Potter, a few of the things that you destroyed were my own listening devices but there was one that I did not place in this office."

Harry nodded and Professor McGonagall said "Mr. Potter, you can not just go around destroying anything that you don't seem to like especially since you don't own them. You might have destroyed something valuable."

Ginny said "There's no need to worry because Harry replicated the charmed objects and transferred the charms to the new objects so when he destroyed the compromised items the person listening on the other side only recognized that the charm was malfunctioning. If the professor wanted, he could place the listening charms back on the items and everything will be as before to not cause suspicion. The one object that was charmed that did not belong to the professor would retransmit back to whoever was listening. If that was to be done than I recommend that we do it soon so not to cause too much suspicion. You can leave the item uncharmed and set a trap to see who was listening."

Harry said "Professor, if you choose to reactivate the charms then please do not mention where I was at and only identify where I was at as 'my home'."

Dumbledore nodded and said "I will reactivate the charms and will later determine who is listening in. Everybody please be mindful of what is being spoken in this room."

Kayla asked "Did you give up any information about where Harry has been in this office in the past?"

Everybody was quiet for a moment as they thought about what Kayla just asked. After a few people shook their heads, Harry let out a sigh of relief and Dumbledore went through the motions of reactivating the listening charms. When that was done, Dumbledore said "Mr. Potter and Miss Weasley, you two know better than to leave whenever you all want. There is a matter of security and liability."

Ginny said "Harry needed to recover where we knew was safe and we would do it again."

McGonagall replied in a stern voice "Since you all deliberately broke school rule then the two of you will be getting detention tomorrow with Professor Snape down in the dungeons."

Snape had a calculating look with a mixture of joy because he was getting a chance for revenge on Harry and anger for having to spend time with Harry. Harry on the other hand showed no emotions. He was trying to think of ways to insure his safety and determine ways to get back at Snape should he get treated poorly in the dungeons.

Ginny replied "Yes ma'am".

Dumbledore looked at Harry and said "Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?"

Harry decided to take a page out of Dumbledore's playbook and said "There's nothing at this time that I believe that you all should know." Everybody also took that as their cue to leave.

The next night Harry showed up in the dungeons accompanied by Ginny for detention. The potions classroom was changed and there was a large open area in the middle with all of Slytherin house gathered in the room. At the center of the room was a large white outline of a circle. Snape sneered at them upon their arrival and said "Potter, Weasley, rumor has it that you were in charge of a vigilante group that defied school rules as usual last year. I see that you all like to break school rules and continue to do so and that is why you two are serving detention with me. A few of my students found out about your detention and offered a solution." Snape looked at the students from his house and then said "You two will be dueling against the students in my house. In order to be fair you two will not be dueling everybody but only a handful so that my students can see how to duel." Snape said the last part with sarcasm and looking forward to watching his students getting revenge on what happened to Malfoy and humiliating him in front of the whole school.

Malfoy, Nott, Parkinson, Goyle, Crabbe, and five other Slytherins walked into the open area with their wands drawn. Harry and Ginny walked in also with each using their rose wand. Harry asked "What are the rules?"

Snape said "The only rules are you're not allowed to use the unforgivables and once you are removed from the circle or unable to continue then you are out."

Snape walked over to stand next to Malfoy. Harry asked "Are you a part of this duel also?"

Snape replied "Of course, considering you were able to take out Death eater's with little effort than you should be able to handle me in this duel also." There was a moment of silence then Snape yelled "Begin!"

All of the Slytherins shot various spells from cutting hex to stunning spells with the more painful ones coming from Malfoy and his goons along with Snape. Ginny jumped in front of Harry and summoned a strong shield charm while Harry shot a spell into the air which formed a large transparent silver dome to form around the dueling area.

After the volley of spells, Malfoy was annoyed that the Gryffindor's weren't hit and asked "What do you think you're doing Potty? Are you going to let the little slut take on this fight while you hide?"

Harry replied "Do you honestly believe that you and your pathetic group of followers can beat Ginny and me? We beat the crap out of your parents last year and all of you future Death eater's honestly believe that you can beat us? If you would take notice of the silver dome that surrounds us, I've just made sure that no stray spells will hit somebody who is watching this fight. It also prevents you from running away and when I'm done with you Malfoy, you'll be walking around with one or more less body parts." The fire in Harry's eyes could be seen by the Slytherins and they were contemplating if this was a good idea or not.

Snape yelled "You are going to remove that charm now Potter." Snape was nervous that one of his ways to leave the duel was now

taken away. He knew that he was going to have to duel against Harry now and there was no way to run if it didn't go his way.

After Snape's yelling, a white cloudy mist started to shoot out from both Harry's and Ginny's wand that quickly clouded the entire dueling area in a fog that was so thick that you couldn't see your hands in front of your face. After a series of spells to clear up the air, the Slytherins saw that the five unknown Slytherins were bound, gagged, and hanging from their feet from the center of the dome.

Harry and Ginny was standing behind the group and fired off six quick bludgeoning spells which threw the Slytherins across the dome making them slam against the magical shield. They then proceeded to stun each one of them while they were disoriented and started to hang each one of them by their feet from the center of the dome. There was a pile of wands on the ground that belonged to all of the hanging students and Snape.

After contemplating what to do with each one of them, Harry lowered Draco, Nott, Parkinson, Crabbe, and Goyle. He turned the five Slytherins into little rats while Ginny conjured a large glass containment area that had dead leaves all along the bottom. Harry tossed the five rats into their new cage and then conjured a snake just like how Draco did during his second year. What the Slytherins didn't know was that the Ginny placed a repelling charm on the rats and whenever the python got close to the rats, it would act to attack but hesitate just long enough so that the rats could get away.

Harry was shooting various spells at Snape which changed his wardrobe to different styles of muggle dress. He also gave Snape two large breasts to fill out his dress. Harry settled on a short skimpy pink dress. Snape was angry with Harry, and if possible beyond angry when Snape got his breasts. Harry and Ginny were rolling around on the ground in laughter.

By the time he had finished with Snape, Ginny told him "Harry, I think that the rats are exhausted, they aren't even trying to run anymore. That's no fun."

Harry picked up the rats which were exhausted from all of the running and banished the snake at the same time. Harry turned the five Slytherins back to the way they usually appeared but they were so tired and couldn't move from their spot on the ground. Ginny turned all of their robes into light purple muggle dresses similar to that of Snape's pink dress. The dresses were all spaghetti strap with a low cut in the front and high above the knees. She also added a few charms that would activate when one of the five Slytherins would try to insult somebody. Instead of insulting somebody they would either end up saying 'I love Snape', 'I love Snape's dress', 'does my dress make me look fat', or 'I love to dress in women's clothing.'

For Pansy, this wasn't funny enough so Ginny decided to dress her up in an ugly brown business suit. All of her glamour charms were removed which revealed an ugly girl with no makeup and no magical enhancements.

Harry conjured a large sofa and moved all of the Slytherins wearing dresses to sit on the sofa with their hands on each other. Snape was sitting in the middle with Pansy standing behind them holding a sign that said 'A Slytherin reunion'. The five Slytherins that Harry did not know were standing around the back of the sofa around Pansy. They were all holding bouquets of roses and acting like they were handing it to the ones that were wearing the dresses.

After everybody was lined up, Harry enlarged a camera that was shrunken in his pocket. Harry decided that he should always carry a camera with him to take pictures when things didn't look right so he could show someone without always having to show the memory in his head. Ginny took the camera and mockingly said "Alright Slytherins remember to look at the birdie and smile." Harry shot a few birds from the tip of his wand as Ginny took the picture or more like dozens of pictures.

Harry shrunk the camera and put it back in his pocket. He took Ginny's hand, turned to the cross dressed Slytherins, and in a mockingly sad voice said "I guess you all won the duel." Harry removed the silver dome and the two of them walked out of the circle.

While Ginny and Harry were making their way out, everybody in the classroom heard Ginny mockingly say "I thought we had a chance at winning just now too."

Harry mockingly replied "It's alright; we'll get them next time."

A few of the Slytherins wanted to burst out laughing at how their classmates and head of house looked but knew that they couldn't let on that they were friends with Harry. Ginny and Harry were leaning on each other for support as they laughed their way back to their dormitories. They spent the night telling Kayla what happened and she was on the ground rolling with laughter and laughed even harder when the three of them finished developing the photos. The trio spent much of the night duplicating the pictures.

The next morning the trio got up early and went down to the kitchen to talk to the house elves about delivering the picture with each place setting that was going to be set for breakfast. The house elves happily agreed because they didn't like Draco and his group much either because they knew how many of the pureblood families liked to beat their house elves. The students were gathering in the Great Hall and many of them were grumpy that their breakfast hadn't arrived yet. The professors were also surprised that this was happening but one look at Harry and they knew that something was about to happen.

All of a sudden all of the place settings showed up with all the food for breakfast. The students were excited to see the food at first and then almost everyone in the Great Hall bursted out with laughter with many people rolling around on the ground. A few of the professors also had a hard time holding in their laughter especially Remus, Tonks, and Hagrid.

On the back on the picture there was a note that said 'Never mess with an heir of the Marauders.'

When Remus saw the note on the back, he was beaming with joy at Harry. Harry made his way over to Remus when Dumbledore stopped him and gravely asked "Harry was this really necessary?" Dumbledore was gesturing to the picture he was holding.

Harry replied "You can make that decision for yourself." Harry pulled out his wand and pointed it at the enchanted ceiling. The scene from last night started to show for everybody to see starting at when Harry and Ginny entered the dungeons and ended when the two of them walked out of the door.

While the scene was playing, Harry continued on to Remus who was having a hard time sitting as he watched everything play out. When it was over Remus clutched onto Harry for support and happily said "I think that the heir of the Marauders has claimed his rightful spot with this prank."

The Great Hall bursted out with even more laughter when the scene ended. The people who were noticeably not present were Snape and the ten Slytherins that tried to take on Harry and Ginny the night before. What the people in the hall didn't know was that Ginny and Harry placed the charms so that it would last for five days and they couldn't remove the dresses or in Pansy's case her suit.

The next day, the Slytherins showed up acting like nothing was wrong in their dresses. The group received a few mock whistles and since they didn't show up to receive their copy of the pictures that Harry, Ginny, and Kayla duplicated, they received their copy to their horror during dinner time and immediately set it on fire. When the pictures were on fire, the Great Hall busted out with even more laughter. During that week, there were lots of rude remarks to the dressed Slytherins, pointing, and most of all laughter.

A/N: Ok, it started off a little serious to continue the line of Dumbledore vs. Harry but I decided that comic relief is always fun to write. After all, there needs to be some kind of way to relieve the tension in the story and since I already started the Snape and Malfoy bashing, I decided to continue. Don't worry, all of you the story will get serious again.

Chapter 34

Marauder's Sanctuary

A few days after Harry and Ginny's prank on the Slytherins, after the charms wore off, the school returned back to business as usual. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla continued their training together while Harry and Ginny still managed some alone time together. Hermione and Ron restarted the DA with about twenty students who were newly recruited and those who sided with Dumbledore. The Patriots were also back to their usual schedule and to Dumbledore's annoyance, their practice area was still a secret. Remus and Tonks recognized almost immediately that members of the DA and the Patriots were performing much better in their class and to a greater extent the Patriots were doing much better all around because of Harry's implementation of charms and transfiguration work into the Patriot's training.

Harry's spies at Grimmauld Place which were mainly the house elves reported that the Order of the Phoenix was in a state of disarray. The group was fighting with itself because of a growing minority in the organization was starting to voice the same concerns as Harry did earlier. This caused a split in the Order between the Dumbledore supporters and the Potter supporters. The only thing that was keeping the Potter supporters from breaking away was because Harry was still in school and being led by a teenager was not a comforting thought even though they agreed with what he was saying. Harry instructed members of the Alliance of Magic to start spying on all suspected and confirmed Death eaters. This task was mainly taken up by the house elves because they had access to every wizarding house and business. The house elves then recorded each suspected Death eater's activities and noted if they saw the Dark Mark or not. The goblins were also instructed to prepare to close all accounts of those suspected and confirmed Death eaters on a moments notice. The centaurs increased their daily surveillance of the Forbidden Forest and aided in constructing a massive underground safe house for mass evacuations should it become necessary. It was agreed that the Patriots were too young to participate in the fighting unless forced to. Harry started sending groups of about five patriots at a time into the forest with the centaurs as escorts so they could become familiar with the forest should they

need to retreat into the forest for any reason. A tunnel was being constructed to connect the Chamber of Secrets to the safe house by the Patriots to have a secure escape route for either place.

In an attempt to speed up the process and for increased security, Harry sent twenty of his house elves to assist in building the tunnel and another twenty to help take care of the orphans. Harry was afraid that Voldemort would try to attack the orphans because they were easy targets that were tied to him. A new three level communication system was setup that involved Harry's phoenixes and Blaze, the house elves, and watches to help ensure that if one or more forms of communication were to go down then they could rely on another form to communicate. The Ministry of Magic took control of the fight against Voldemort and made it easier to qualify for Auror training during times of war. They also reorganized the small town defense groups that formed after Harry's speech in Diagon Alley. The town defense groups were now better organized, received funding for training, leaders were trained in combat strategies, and a new communication network was setup using express owls to deliver information more efficiently. Each town also had an Auror advisor that met with town leaders once a week to help setup defense strategies and evacuation procedures for civilians.

During these weeks of preparation, Voldemort was quiet and most suspected that he was planning something big, so the question became when he was going to attack. During breakfast in early March, Harry, Ginny, and Kayla were enjoying their breakfast when the morning posts arrived. Hidden amongst the owls was a hawk that was making its way towards Harry. When Dumbledore and Snape saw the hawk they knew that it was a message from Voldemort.

The hawk dropped its letter while hovering above Harry and flew off. Ginny also knew what a letter delivered by a hawk meant so she held Harry's hand which kept him from touching the letter and said "Harry, be careful with that letter. A letter delivered by a hawk is usually from Voldemort or his second in command. It could be a portkey so you should open it with your wand."

Harry pulled out his wand and did a few complicated wand movements over the letter which revealed that the letter was not

charmed. Harry opened up the letter while Ginny leaned in to read the letter also. The letter read as follows:

Potter,

The offer that I gave you during your first year stands. You can stand by me as my second in command. I recognize talent. In return for your allegiance to me, I will bring back your parents and your godfather, you and your loved ones will be under my protection, and you can choose a piece of land later on to live on with your loved ones which my followers will not disturb you. Post your reply with a red spark in the air in one week for a no or a green spark in the air for yes. Reply at night time and fire the sparks over the lake at Hogwarts.

Lord Voldemort

Harry handed the letter to Kayla to read while Ginny asked "Harry, what do you think?"

Harry responded "This is a very attractive offer."

Kayla asked "Are you really considering this?"

Ginny replied "He's just thinking about it but more likely he won't take it. It's like a 1 possibility of this happening mainly due to all the betrayals that have gone on."

While Ginny finished somebody came up behind the three of them and grabbed the letter. The trio turned around to see Snape, McGonagall, and Dumbledore behind them. Harry and Ginny were fingering their wands while Harry demanded "That's a personal letter and it does not concern you so I would like my letter back."

Snape replied with an air of superiority "Potter, nothing of yours is considered personal. We are entitled to know why the Dark Lord is contacting you and what he is saying."

Ginny pulled out her wand and set the letter on fire which quickly burned itself up as Snape dropped the burning letter. Dumbledore

tried to put the fire out but it was too late. There were only ashes left. Snape angrily said “Weasley, how dare you attack me?”

Harry replied for Ginny “What time shall we serve detention with you tonight Professor?”

The image of what happened last time at detention ran through Snape’s mind as Harry and Ginny was grinning at the man. Dumbledore sighed then said “Mr. Potter, will you follow me to my office.” It was more of a command then a question which Harry complied.

The three professors and three students made their way to the Headmaster’s office. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla sat off to the side at the farthest chairs from the three professors. Dumbledore asked “Mr. Potter, why is Voldemort contacting you?”

Harry replied “That is of a personal matter which I don’t wish to talk about.”

McGonagall said “Mr. Potter, this is an important issue even you can see that. We need to know what You-Know-Who said.”

Harry said “If I felt it was necessary for me to tell you then I would but I don’t believe that you all need to know. If you will excuse us, the three of us have classes we need to go to.”

The three of them stood up and with a nod from Dumbledore, they left. Order members spent the rest of the day trying to get the trio to talk but they refused to and liked the fact that the Order was spending so much energy on trying to get a piece of information that wasn’t worth anything.

A few days later, the Marauder’s Sanctuary (A/N: The name is thanks to GiGiFanFic), which was the underground hideout built in the Forbidden Forest was complete. It was known as the Sanctuary for short. The tunnel to the Sanctuary was also complete and the Patriots were going to meet up with representatives from the centaurs, the goblins, and the house elves to setup the place.

The Marauder's Sanctuary had three entrances. The first entrance was through the tunnel connecting it to the Chamber of Secrets. The second entrance was a private floo network that was connected to a secured floo at Gringott's. The secured floo at Gringott's could only go to the Sanctuary and was located in a vault that only members of the Alliance of Magic had access to. The last entrance was connected to a water well that was in the middle of the Forbidden Forest. The well was the only part of the Sanctuary that reached above ground. The water well looked to be a normal well and water could be drawn from it but if you wanted to enter the Sanctuary then you would jump down the well. After about ten feet of water, you fall through a magic seal that keeps the water from spilling into the Sanctuary but allows for people to fall through. The centaurs only have to touch the well and they would be transported into the Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary is four stories tall consisting of four wings that are connected by a large circular foyer which was a rotunda that has circular ramps that leads to balconies on each floor that overlooked the foyer. The top of the foyer was a large magical glass dome that showed the scene above the Forbidden Forest. The balconies ran the length of the foyer. The ground was laid with a light color marble with the walls colored in an off white color. The north wing was all living space. The first and second floor consisted of thirty rooms on each floor with fifteen rooms on each side of the hallway. Each room had two bunk beds, two sofas that faced each other with a small table in the middle. The sofa area was between the two bunk beds that were on opposite sides of the room. There are four desks in the room with two desks attached to each bunk bed. There was one desk on each side of the beds. There is also a small bathroom that is opposite to the main entrance of the room. The third and fourth floor were all doubles where there were two queen size beds in each room with a desk next to each bed. There were sofas to the back of the room that had a small table between the sofas and a small fireplace on the back wall. The bedroom suites were joined by a bathroom with two bedrooms to a bathroom. There were a total of thirty bedrooms each on the third and fourth floor. All of the bedrooms had magic windows that allowed in sunlight and fresh air.

The West Wing consisted of a large kitchen on the second floor with a large dinning area. The dinning area had three long rows of

segmented tables to eat and had large magical windows that let in sunlight and air. The kitchen was at the far end of the wing. The third and fourth floor was a large infirmary that was similar to how the Hogwarts infirmary was set up. There were four stock rooms on each floor with each stock room specializing in centaur, wizard, goblin, or elf medicine. There were also large windows in this wing to allow light and air to flow through the room. The first floor was a small prison. There were a total of sixty small prison cells that had no windows and concrete walls on three sides to each cell. The fourth wall was made out of reinforced glass that was unbreakable which allowed those in the hallway to see into the cells but those in the cell could not see out into the hallway. Each cell had a small uncomfortable wooden bed, a small sink, and toilet. At the rear at the far end to the entrance on the first floor after the prison cells were large standard interrogation rooms.

The East Wing served as the entry and exit areas to the Sanctuary and as a multipurpose area. The fourth floor is large and spacious. The end of the hallway is where the tunnel to Hogwarts connected with the Sanctuary. In the middle of the hallway is a roped off area for those entering and exiting through the well. Near the entrance to the hallway from the foyer is the fireplace that was connected to Gringott's. There were plans in setting up a safe portkey point and second to the prison; this was the most guarded area in the Sanctuary. The second and third floor were partly joined because there were ten meeting rooms that accommodated about twenty people and two meeting rooms that accommodated about 250 people each. The larger meeting rooms were designed in a stadium setup. The ten smaller meeting rooms could be used as either classrooms or recreational area for children. The first floor had a small bank for counter withdrawal and currency exchanges. There were also small shops to buy miscellaneous items and a large library with study rooms that was about the size of the Hogwarts library.

The South Wing was separated for each magical group to control a floor. The Goblins controlled the first floor of the wing and set it up with various meeting areas and offices if they needed to move quickly. The House Elves controlled the second floor which consisted of a few offices and training areas for elves only. They also added smaller bedrooms to accommodate the house elves that were going to be

staying at the Marauder's Sanctuary. The third floor was controlled by wizards. Harry had set up four office suites with each suite consisting of two offices that was joined by a common area. Each office had a large desk, comfortable seating area for about ten people, and bookcases behind the desk. He also had two meeting rooms set up that were designed for about forty people each. The rest of the rooms were training rooms for physical fitness and magic. Three rooms were for physical fitness with the equipment that could be seen in a muggle gym. There were six rooms for magical training with each consisting of large areas that had no desks but padded walls. The fourth floor was for the Centaurs. The Centaurs replicated the Forbidden Forest and had no rooms but what looked like plant life everywhere. The ceiling to the centaur's floor was enchanted to look exactly like what it looked like over the Forbidden Forest where they gathered to look at the stars and make prophecies.

The night came for Harry to respond to Voldemort's offer. It was decided that Harry would go out by himself to send the message then make his way back to the castle immediately. Ginny and Kayla were going to keep Harry in their sights but were to remain unseen. It was a clear night with no moon and everything went as planned. Harry sent off red sparks into the air to signal that he was not going to join Voldemort which was not a surprise.

Ever since the Marauder's Sanctuary was completed and furnished it fell into heavy use by the goblins and house elves. The cleaning house elves continued to do their job with cooking and cleaning. The war elves stayed at the Sanctuary for easier communication, deployment, and training. The goblins moved a few of their executive offices into the Sanctuary and started operating from underground just in case an attack was to occur at any of its banks around the world. The centaurs liked to stay above ground and vigilantly stood guard over the well entrance. The Patriots made occasional trips to the Sanctuary to setup their temporary rooms should they evacuate from Hogwarts. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla also setup their offices on the wizarding floor to better lead the Alliance of Magic. The Alliance members knew about Voldemort's offer and Harry's response. Harry had the Alliance on heightened alert just in case Voldemort decided to retaliate in response to Harry's answer.

Two nights after Harry's response, during dinner time, Nightlight appeared in the Great Hall with a burst of blue and white flames near Harry. Nightlight was carrying a message from the house elves' leader. Most of the students didn't take any notice of what was happening because it was common to see Harry's phoenixes around school. Harry opened the message as Kayla and Ginny leaned in to read.

Harry Potter,

An elf spy just picked up a message that the four orphanages will be attacked tomorrow night in response to your answer. What is your course of action?

Houseman

Harry, Ginny, and Kayla were whispering to each other about possible courses of actions to take care of the threat. It was decided that the Ministry and Order would be informed of the plan so they would not walk into a trap or spoil their plans. Harry used his watch to alert the members of Potter's Patriots to what was going on and told them they were allowed to join in on the meeting if they wanted to but this would reveal that they were a member of Harry's army. After alerting the Patriots, Harry alerted his liaison members for the Alliance and told them to pass the message along.

Harry made his way up to the Head Table and asked Professor Dumbledore "Professor, I think you might want to take a look at the intelligence I just received from my spies." He handed the message to Dumbledore.

Dumbledore read it and replied "Mr. Potter, don't worry, we'll take care of it."

Harry shook his head and said "Professor, something is already being done about it. I need you to call Mr. Weasley to come to a meeting to represent the Ministry in an official capacity and I need for the Order to be represented at the meeting also so I can tell you what is going to happen."

Dumbledore nodded and said "When and where is this meeting taking place?"

Harry said "Go to Gringott's and ask the bank manager to let you into the Sanctuary tonight about half an hour after dinner."

Dumbledore nodded again and asked "Can you tell me what you are planning?"

Harry replied "It's not safe here to say but you will find out tonight."

Dumbledore replied "Tonight then." He didn't want to push Harry anymore than necessary because this was the first time Harry was permitting the Order and the Ministry in on his plans. This could be the first steps to allowing both groups into the Alliance of Magic.

After dinner, the Patriots gathered down in the Chamber of Secrets wearing their battle robe uniforms. The centaurs were the first to arrive followed by the house elves. The Order and Ministry were dressed in their uniforms and arrived escorted by the goblins. The Patriots were the last to show up and every member volunteered to show up for the meeting. The meeting was going to be held in the largest meeting area which was setup in a stadium style seating and at the center is a large round table.

There was some mingling between all the different groups. The Order was led by Dumbledore and was accompanied by most of the Order and the Ministry was led in by Mr. Weasley with a few trusted advisors like Madame Bones. When the Order saw Harry's group arrive, they were wondering how they arrived and was surprised with how many students were following him.

Every group represented had three seats at the round table. Harry called for order in the room and everybody took their seats. The extra people who accompanied their leaders sat in the seats behind their leaders with the exception of the centaurs. The centaurs section had no seats.

Harry stood up and said "Welcome everybody to the first meeting of the Alliance of Magic in our new headquarters, the Marauder's Sanctuary."

There was a loud round of applause as many stood up and cheered. Harry raised his hand to calm everybody down and continued to say "We're assembled today to discuss the threat of Voldemort on the Orphans of Great Britain. We were informed earlier today by our spy located deep within Voldemort's inner circle that all of the wizarding orphanages will be attacked tomorrow night in response to my message to Voldemort."

There were some mumbling and Harry continued to say "Let me fill in those that don't know the entire story yet. A few days ago Voldemort offered me a chance to align myself with him as his second in command." There were gasps that were mainly coming from the Order but Harry ignored them and said "I rejected his offer and now he feels that retaliation is necessary." He sat back down when done speaking.

Alpha, the leader of the goblins stood up and said "Mr. Potter, what have you decided to do in response?" As he finished, the goblin sat back down.

Harry stood up and said "After speaking with a few advisors, we feel that the best course of action right now is to surrender the Lily, Moony, and Padfoot Centers. We should concentrate on the defense of the Prongs Center, where it is the easiest to defend later on in this war. The Prongs Center is located close enough to Hogwarts to be protected by both the Patriots and the Centaurs. We need at least one center open to accept children."

Dumbledore stood up and asked "Mr. Potter, what do you plan to do with the orphans?"

Harry replied "We plan on moving all of the children into the Sanctuary. There is enough room here for them and it would be safe for them. When things are more secured, we will move them all to the Prongs Center."

Mr. Weasley asked "What do you plan on doing with the other three centers?"

Harry said "That is the main reason for the meeting tonight. The three centers that will be abandoned will be evacuated tomorrow morning but will maintain the appearance that everything was happening like normal. I will pass the word to Ms. Grant, the director of the centers, of our plans. Security has been increased at every center with a strike team hidden at each site. After everybody is evacuated then the buildings will be laced with muggle explosives and when the Death eaters charge in, the building will seal them inside and implode on them."

Mr. Weasley responded "You can't be serious about killing."

Harry nodded then said "The Death eaters are the ones that are choosing to attack defenseless children. We know that once they break into the orphanages then they will start to torture and kill every man, woman, and child in those buildings. If we can take out all of these Death eaters without having to risk ourselves then I will take that path. So what if we lose a building, buildings can be rebuilt."

Dumbledore asked "Mr. Potter, would you be willing to allow the Order and Aurors to take on this fight."

Harry looked at the members of the Alliance as if silently communicating with them. Harry sighed then replied "I formally ask the Order and Ministry Auror's in help protecting the Prongs Center and help in the recovery effort around the other orphanages. This way the Alliance can remain relatively unknown to the world."

Mr. Weasley said "The Ministry of Magic will offer our aid and have Auror's stationed throughout Hogsmeade to help protect the people."

Dumbledore said "The Order of the Phoenix will also be there to assist the Auror's and evacuate the children."

Harry said "Thank you, the defense of Hogsmeade and the Prongs Center will fall under the responsibilities of the Ministry and the Order. The Alliance will evacuate the children and provide increased security

while the children stay here at the Sanctuary. Alliance strike forces will also be on stand by to assist the Auror's and the Order should the need arise."

Houseman, the leader of the house elves stood up and said "Harry Potter, I would like to open for discussion the subject of allowing the Ministry of Magic and the Order of the Phoenix into the Alliance of Magic as non-voting parties that will be permitted to advise and sit in on non-secured meetings."

Harry said "Let's take 30 minutes for each group to discuss this with our own advisors." With that, the delegates got up from their seat and went back to their groups to discuss the pros and cons of allowing those groups into the Alliance.

Half an hour later, the delegates gathered and Harry stood up to say "The discussion on admittance of The Order of the Phoenix and The British Ministry of Magic as non-voting members of The Alliance of Magic is now open."

Alpha stood up and said, "I have talked with the centaurs and house elves already and agree that if the Ministry and Order don't repeal all discriminatory legislation and ensure equality for magical creatures then we will not further consider allowing the two groups into the Alliance."

Mr. Weasley stood up and said "Alpha, I promise you that I will do all I can to promote equality for all magical creatures."

Dumbledore nodded and said "The Order also promises to assist in the push for equality."

Ronan looked to Harry and asked "Do you have any reservations?"

Harry nodded when he said "I'm not sure how much we can trust the Ministry and the Order to not turn on us when they see another opportunity to get what they want."

Ronan asked "What is it that you believe that they want?"

Harry replied "I believe that if they could find a way to control the Alliance then they would try to seize the power. The Order has already spent much of their time this school year trying to exert control over me and has tried to seize the leadership of the DA."

Members of the Order jumped up and started to voice their disagreement but were quieted by Dumbledore. After the Order calmed down, Dumbledore said "It is true that the Order wishes to have custody of Mr. Potter but that is for his protection. We still believe that it would be best of Mr. Potter were to submit to the Order."

Harry replied "Don't you get it, I went to Azkaban willingly before I allowed you all to control me like some tool. I just don't know to what extent you all will go to try to seize control of everything."

Dumbledore replied "We will be in an advisory role only so we wouldn't be able to affect much because we can't vote."

Harry turned to the members and said "I have my reservations and you all understand why. I have no problems allowing them to sit in on non-sensitive meetings because we need to communicate with those that are fighting against the same enemy." Harry didn't want to call them allies in this war.

Mr. Weasley asked "If we are allowed in then can we have access to this facility?"

Harry said "We can discuss that after if you are allowed into the Alliance. Now, who are in favor of allowing the Order of the Phoenix and the British Ministry of Magic to become members of the Alliance of Magic as non-voting members and can not participate in sensitive meetings?"

The majority of those eligible to vote agreed to allow them in while all of the Patriots delegation voted against letting them in along with a few other members. Harry said, "I extend an invitation for the Order of the Phoenix and the British Ministry of Magic to join the Alliance of Magic."

Dumbledore stood up and said "As the leader of the Order of the Phoenix, I formally accept the invitation on behalf of the Order."

Mr. Weasley stood up and said "As the Minister of Magic, I formally accept the invitation to become a member of the Alliance of Magic on behalf of the British Ministry of Magic."

Harry nodded and everybody stood up and clapped to welcome in their new members. After the clapping subsided Harry said "Unless there are objections by the other members, I will allow the opening of the Marauders Sanctuary to the British Ministry of Magic and the Order of the Phoenix to bring their wounded here, to bring those that need to go into hiding, and to attend meetings. Those that need to stay here will have to be approved by me or the Alliance."

He looked around to see if there were any disagreements and there was no dissent. Dumbledore stood up and asked "How are we to enter the Sanctuary?"

Harry said "The voting members will discuss that at a later time due to security concerns. We will let you know by the end of the week that is unless something happens that won't allow the Alliance to meet."

Dumbledore nodded and the meeting was called to an end. The Ministry and Order were given a tour of the facility which they were pleased to see such a nice facility. The Order and the Ministry were offered their own office suites which were next to Harry's suite. It was later decided that the only Ministry officials allowed to freely come and go were Mr. Weasley and Madame Bones. The only people for the Order that were allowed to enter the Sanctuary were people that knew Harry with the exception of Snape. While this was going on, the Patriots were making their way back to Hogwarts before the professors got back to school.

That night everyone hoped that tomorrow will turn out according to plan. The Order and the Ministry were glad to finally be able to attend the meetings which were one step closer to becoming voting members. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla just hoped that allowing the Order and Ministry in was the right thing to do and knew to be alert to anything that Dumbledore might try to pull.

A/N: The Alliance of Magic will be going public soon but for now they took a page out of Voldemort's playbook and decided to hide as long as they could and operate in the shadows until they are uncovered by the public. Voldemort as you all can guess is building for a few major attacks aimed directly at the heart of society which is to cause fear and panic by hurting the children and the heroes. Oh, I forgot to list the numbers earlier but the DA is about 20 members plus or minus about five people. The Patriots are at about 60 members plus or minus about five and the Order is at about 100 members plus or minus a few. Just general numbers to compare by so future fight scenes could be better understood. Let's see, one person asked where I am from. I'm from New Orleans, USA. For the last thing, I do try to fix my errors when there are constructive criticisms (which I appreciate cause I will keep them in mind if I decide to write another story) but when you read 33 chapters and the only thing you say is that the story is boring, all I have to ask is why are you still reading?

Chapter 35

The Backlash

Ms. Grant, the director of the orphanages, immediately informed the site directors of what was about to happen to the orphanages. The strike elves were moved to each site for added security during the evacuation. The Patriots took ten-man shifts at the Sanctuary to help care for the orphans and provide security upon their arrival. The goblins moved part of their strike teams to the Sanctuary, Forbidden Forest, and Gringott's to be easily deployed anywhere in England should the need arise. The Order of the Phoenix had all their members on alert and half their members were positioned at Grimmauld Place waiting for the sign to defend Hogsmeade while the others were sent on light patrols in York, London, Manchester, and five were left at the Sanctuary. The Ministry of Magic moved half of their active Auror's into the Ministry building in London while a quarter were sent to patrol in all high wizard populations areas. The rest of the Auror's were on stand by and sent home to rest so the Ministry would have some fresh Auror's should the fighting take a long time.

The evacuation started at six in the morning with Portkey's being delivered by Nightlight to all of the sites. Blaze maintained a watch in the Forbidden Forest near the entrance to the Sanctuary while the Centaurs increased their patrols to the outer areas of the forest so they could notify Harry if danger was heading towards the Sanctuary. The house elves that were sent to help maintain the different orphanages by cooking or cleaning were now busy transporting documents to the Sanctuary and destroying anything that wasn't going to be taken with them. Sunrise and Sunset were given the day off to rest because they were going to participate in the fighting that evening.

By ten o'clock that morning, four hours after the evacuation had started all of the children and most of the staff from the four orphanages was getting settled into their new home. The children took up residence in the bottom two floors in the rooms with the bunk beds. The Patriots were taking care of the children while the staff was getting everything in order. Harry gave Ms. Grant and her top advisors the last office suite that was left in the wizarding floor. The orphanage staff was discussing how to make the transition easier for

the children and was setting up activities to keep them pre-occupied. Most of the children were having a fun time wandering the Sanctuary and talking to the house elves, goblins, centaurs that weren't on patrol, and Patriot members who were escorting the kids around the Sanctuary.

The few staff members that were left behind at the various orphanages were there to give the appearance that nothing was out of the ordinary at the orphanages. They were each wearing a portkey necklace that activated once the attack began. After the children were evacuated, with the exception of the Prongs Center, the house elves were given instructions on how to and where to hide the explosives and how to set them to explode. The explosion was designed for the building to implode on itself so none of the buildings around it would be damaged. After all was set, the anxious waiting began.

That evening, the simultaneous attacks began around 8:15. At York, the Death Eaters apparated just across the street from the Moony Center and charged at the building. The group of about ten Death Eaters shot explosion hexes through the windows and at the doors to cause as much damage and as much confusion as possible so they could make their way into the building with little resistance. In all the excitement of breaking into the Moony Center, they failed to notice that there wasn't anybody in the halls or the rooms of the building. The Death Eaters split up and searched the building to find anybody to torture and kill.

The town resistance group showed up, accompanied by a few Auror's who were holding the group from charging into the orphanage and engaging the Death Eaters in battle. One of the Death Eaters blew the roof off of the building and shot the Dark Mark into the sky. When the Death Eaters realized what was happening, they panicked and a few of them tried to apparate away but found that they couldn't. Other's tried to rush out the doors but couldn't due to the hail of spells that were coming from the town resistance group and Auror's. The spells were coming through every door opening and window that was busted open. The Death Eaters had no way of escape and shortly after realizing their fate, explosions could be heard coming from inside as a large cloud of dust shot out from the building. When it was over, there was nothing more than rubble and the moans of injured

Death Eaters buried in all the rubble. The town people started to dig through the rubble and Ministry officials either arrested the Death Eaters or sent them to St. Mungos in a secured ward to be cared for then sent to prison with the rest of them.

In Manchester, the defense of the orphanage did not go as planned. The Death Eaters apparated further away from the Lily Center than expected. The group was composed of ten Death Eaters. They apparated about one block down the street from the orphanage but in the middle of a small wizarding gathering. Fighting broke out between Death Eaters and the town folks. The town people were quickly assisted by the Manchester Defense Group and Ministry Auror's who were patrolling the city. The Death Eaters were outnumbered and knew they couldn't win but couldn't return to their master without fulfilling their mission so the Death Eaters slowly dueled their way towards the orphanage. By the time they made it to the front lawn of the orphanage, half of the members of their group had already fallen and were being taken into custody. A few of the Death Eaters took this opportunity and shot fire spells at the Lily Center in an attempt to burn the building down. The Death Eaters were disappointed that they didn't hear any screams and tried to make their escape anyway they could think of but since they were so close to the orphanage, they inadvertently walked into the anti-apparition wards. The Death Eaters quickly surrendered when the odds became ten to one. After the Death Eaters were in custody and being led away, the Lily Center exploded due to the fire making it to the explosives and the building imploded on itself. A few Death Eaters did manage to get away when the cloud of dust was covering everybody.

The fight in London at the Padfoot Center was also taking a different turn than planned. The Death Eaters apparated in front of the orphanage building and started firing sealing charms on all the doors and windows to the facility. After sealing the building, they set the building on fire while one of the Death Eaters shot the Dark Mark into the sky above the facility. The Death Eaters were celebrating and none of them seemed to notice that nobody, especially ministry Auror's, didn't show up to stop the celebration. In reality, the London Resistance Group and Auror's were slowly making their way around the Death Eaters. As soon as the Padfoot Center exploded on the inside and the cloud of dust raced through the streets, the resistance

group and Auror's fired spells at random into the unsuspecting Death Eaters. The only thing the Death Eaters could see were brief streaks of light flying around. When the cloud of dust disappeared, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Death Eaters were on the ground unconscious or nursing some kind of wound. The Death Eaters that were left standing started to fight but went down quickly as the Auror's charged the Death Eaters while the resistance gave the Auror's cover fire. In the end, none of the Death Eaters escaped and were all either in ministry holding cells at the Ministry of Magic or in St. Mungos with the rest of their captured comrades either injured or dead.

Hogsmeade was a complete disaster for the Death Eaters. Unlike the other three cities, the Auror's and Order members were waiting to enter in a fight. Auror's and Order members were divided into small groups of five with two groups of ten. The two groups of ten were waiting across the street from the Prongs Center hidden under invisibility cloaks and disillusionment charms. The groups of five were patrolling the surrounding streets and starting at 6 o'clock that night, they were urging residents to stay away. The town defense group aided Auror's in their effort to keep the residents away and setup watch on the edge of town just in case the Death Eaters were going to launch a counter attack.

The Death Eaters showed up about the same time the other three cities were being attacked. They apparated on the street just in front of the Prongs Center and started to make their way towards the orphanage when twenty Auror's and Order members popped out from under invisibility cloaks and removed the disillusionment charms. The Order was firing volley after volley of stunning spells while the Auror's moved closer and apprehended the Death Eaters. All of the Death Eaters were captured in less than five minutes with no casualties to the light side. After the attack was over, the Order waited half an hour then left for Grimmauld Place for debriefing. The Auror's waited for two hours after the attack and half the Auror's left while the rest took shifts guarding the town.

During the attacks, Harry, Kayla, and Ginny, moved to the Sanctuary to receive updates as events were happening and to be ready to aid any group should the need arise. At about 9 o'clock that night, all of the attacks were thwarted and Harry called a meeting to receive

casualty reports. The centaurs, goblins, house elves, and Patriots did not sustain any damage because they did not participate in the actual defenses. The Order sustained no casualties but the Ministry had six wounded but all were expected to make a full recovery in a few days. The six wounded came from Manchester where the Death Eaters apparated to the wrong site. All in all, the defense was considered a success and the Ministry had already started interrogating the Death Eaters.

Voldemort was not pleased with the results and took it out on his Death Eaters. The inner circle who planned the simultaneous attacks and those who managed to escape capture were tortured that night for failure. Voldemort knew that there must have been a spy in his group somewhere but also knew that he could trust Malfoy and Lestrange. Malfoy and Lestrange were the principle people who planned the attacks and the announcement to the rest of the Death eater ranks about the plans wasn't done until ten minutes prior to the attack.

Voldemort called for Bellatrix and Malfoy Sr. to return to ask them about a spy. The two Death Eaters had just left after taking another round of torture and neither of them was looking forward to returning to their master that night but knew that the consequences would be worse if they did not show up. The two came limping in, kneeled at their master's feet, kissed the hem of his robe, and Bellatrix asked "Master, you summoned us?"

Voldemort angrily said "Who else did you tell about the planned attack today?"

Bellatrix replied "No one master. Malfoy and I only talked about the plans when we were here at headquarters. We did not dare speak of it outside of this building."

Malfoy added on "Yes master, we did not speak of it to anyone at all. The only time we spoke of it were with you and in secured rooms where we added our own secrecy charms before we spoke."

Voldemort said "Well, if what you are saying is true then one of you is a spy. There is no other way to explain the rumors that those kids

were evacuated long before the attacks not to mention the Order and Auror's seemed to be waiting for all of this to happen."

Malfoy replied "Master, I'm not sure how they found out. We only met when there were hardly anyone left in the building."

Bellatrix looked up and noticed a house elf scurrying about in the background pretending that it was cleaning. She found that odd because from her understanding most of the house elves have abandoned their posts if they were in service to a Death eater. Bellatrix said "My Lord, there have been rumors that an alliance has been formed between goblins, centaurs, and house elves in an effort to gain political equality. What if they sided with the Ministry and Order? We have seen many laws regulating magical creatures being repealed lately."

Voldemort replied "Bella, are you saying that the house elves have betrayed us?"

Bella nodded while saying "Yes, master."

Voldemort mentally summoned all of the house elves that were in the compound to appear before him. There were five house elves that appeared and unknown to Voldemort, four of them have changed allegiances to Harry and the fifth one was so corrupt that all he thought about was torture and was close to insanity.

Voldemort asked the House Elves "You are bound to tell the truth by the codes that bind house elves to acknowledge your master when asked. Who is your master?"

The four house elves that sided with Harry were proud when they all said "Master Harry Potter is our Master."

Voldemort pulled out his wand and Bellatrix and Malfoy followed suit by pulling out their wands. The three of them proceeded to torture the four house elves for hours. After about five hours of torture the four tortured elves were barely twitching as they lay barely conscious in front of Voldemort and his reassembled Death Eaters. Each Death eater proceeded to take turns torturing the elves both physically and

with magic. At the end of the torture session, the four house elves were unconscious with blood dripping from their bodies. They were suspended in the air hanging upside down by their feet.

After dismissing his Death Eaters for the night, Voldemort turned to Bellatrix and said "Tomorrow morning, take the house elves and cut off their heads. After doing that, take their bodies and hang one in the streets in front of where the orphanages used to stand. Place the heads on a pole and stick the poles in the ground just in front of the bodies and leave the Dark Mark so Potter, the Ministry, and the Order know who did this."

The next morning there was outrage and questions being asked at why there were decapitated house elves across England. Word spread quickly but didn't reach Hogwarts quick enough. The Ministry received word first and was starting their investigation. The Ministry and the Order did not know that the house elves were Harry's spies. That morning when Harry, Ginny, and Kayla arrived at the beginning of breakfast, Harry received a message by his watch that an urgent message was about to be delivered to him by a Hogwarts house elf.

A house elf showed up shortly afterwards with a letter. After delivering the message the house elf disappeared. Harry opened the letter and along with Ginny and Kayla they read.

Harry Potter,

Our spies at Voldemort's compound have been discovered, tortured, and executed. Their bodies are hanging at the site of the orphanages. They have also been decapitated. What is your response?

Houseman

Ginny and Kayla gasped when they read about the bodies hanging at the orphanages while Harry let out a sigh as his anger was building while sorrow was also setting into him. When they were done reading, Ginny asked "What are we going to do about this?"

Harry replied "We have to respond. Our friends were brutally attacked but I'll see what the house elves want to do first because it was their

own that was killed." Harry sent a message to the Alliance for a meeting to be held at the Sanctuary. He also sent a message to the Patriots to be prepared for a mission.

Most of the Patriots were just waking up and were startled by their watch while they were getting ready or were waking up due to the heat being delivered by the watches. The group was alarmed and knew that if Harry called for everybody to be on guard then it had to be serious especially if it is during this time of day. The members got dressed quickly and rushed down to the Chamber of Secrets where Kayla was waiting for the team to assemble and brief them as they made their way to the Sanctuary.

Dumbledore and Mr. Weasley also received the messages in their watches. They received their watches shortly after being allowed to attend meetings. The Order and Ministry were instructed to be at the Sanctuary about two hours after the rest were to assemble. Harry didn't want the Order and Ministry to know anything sensitive yet.

About half an hour after Harry sent out the messages, the voting members were assembled. Harry asked to no one in particular "What happened last night?"

With steel in his voice, Houseman responded, "Our spies to Voldemort were discovered and were executed either last night or this morning. They reported in last night while Voldemort was torturing his followers. When they reported in they said that everything was going to plan and that was the last time we heard from them."

Ronan asked "Do we know what Voldemort did to the four elves?"

Houseman nodded and said "Our elves retrieved our fallen brothers this morning when they were discovered. So far, the four of them were subject to long and intensive torture both physical and magical. They really had no way of escaping because it looked like they were magically bound so they couldn't run away."

With sorrow in his voice, Harry said "I'm sorry for our fallen friends. I ask for a moment of silence to reflect and honor them."

Everybody stood up and bowed their heads in the moment of silence. After the silence, everybody sat back down and Harry asked Houseman “Since the dead were all house elves, what would you like to do in response to the murders.”

Houseman replied “Those house elves, Blink, Fade, Brie, and Feeno, were all bound to you Harry Potter. It is a crime to attack and kill another person’s house elf. Voldemort and his followers killed four of your house elves. It is up to you to decide.”

Harry said “I understand that they were bound to me and I see them as the most loyal of friends. The last time somebody close to me was killed I tried to torture the person responsible but that did not work out the way I wanted and in a way I’m glad that I did not torture her even though I hate her. I am fated to have to kill or be killed before I die but I am not bound to torture. What would you all recommend?”

The group was talking strategy up until the Order and the Ministry showed up. After everybody took their seats, Harry asked the Order and Ministry “Are you aware of Voldemort’s retaliation to the ambush that was setup at the orphanages?”

Dumbledore nodded and said “Harry, the Order was briefed on what the Ministry knows of the situation. About all that we know is four house elves were executed and left at the orphanages as either a warning or response to the Death Eaters failed attempts yesterday.”

Harry turned to Mr. Weasley and asked “Minister Weasley, what is the Ministry’s response to the executions of Blink, Fade, Brie, and Feeno?”

Mr. Weasley responded “There is not much the Ministry can do about this. We don’t know the individuals responsible and the only clue that was left behind that let us know that the Death Eaters did what they did was the Dark Mark. Even if we caught the perpetrators, there’s nothing we could do unless the house elves’ master decided to pursue the matter.”

With conviction, Harry said “I do wish to pursue this matter, they were bound to me. They died helping me. They died as my friends.”

Mr. Weasley sympathetically said “We will do everything that we can to ensure justice is served.”

Dumbledore asked “Harry is there something that you’re not telling us?”

Harry turned to Dumbledore and said “At this time, the Ministry and the Order already have all the information that you all need. The rest of the information will be held in secrecy for now.”

Order and Ministry representatives wanted to voice their objection to Harry’s answer but Harry silenced them by raising his hands and quickly turned to Mr. Weasley and said “Minister, the Alliance formally asks that the Ministry of Magic pass legislation for the execution of all confirmed Death Eaters after a fair trial and revealing the dark mark on their arm.”

Dumbledore objected “You can’t be serious Harry. Let justice be done by sending the Death Eaters to Azkaban for the rest of their lives. It is a worse punishment to live a life in Azkaban then to die a quick death.”

Ginny stood up, took Harry’s hand in hers, and spoke for Harry. She said “Professor, the last two times we sent Death Eaters to Azkaban they managed to break out to serve Voldemort. The escaped Death Eaters managed to kill and torture more people. It is better to give them an execution and put them and us out of our misery instead of trying to inflict punishment only to have them escape again.” She turned to her dad and said “No offense dad but the Ministry has proven time and time again that it can not stop those who are determined enough from escaping from Azkaban. Let the Death Eaters die, for it is better for society.”

Hermione stood up and accusingly said “Who are we to choose who lives and dies? I wanted to object to killing the Death Eaters that invaded the orphanages but I held my tongue because they were attacking children. Ever since our meeting a few weeks ago, I have

been thinking about what gave us the right to sign another person's death warrant. We can not execute somebody for joining an organization. What if they didn't kill or torture anybody? What if they were forced to join? What if they were repentant like Professor Snape?"

Ginny replied "The voting members have discussed this already. Each captured Death eater will have a few memories extracted from them and presented at their trial no matter if it is prejudicial against them or us. We will extract the memory where they chose to be a Death eater, the moment that they took the dark mark, five of their most incriminating memories like during Death eater missions or personal matters, and their latest memory if they are truly repentant or not."

Hermione responded "Even if they are guilty of everything. We still shouldn't be the ones playing God. Let the Death Eaters suffer a fate worse than death."

The debate between executing and imprisoning the Death Eaters continued on for another hour. The Alliance was divided with the voting members agreeing to follow what Harry was going to decide and the non voting members who were against the death penalty. The debate was starting to go back in a circle so Harry called for order and said "I ask that the Ministry continue to pass the execution law but it will be up to the Ministry to determine if the guilty will be sentenced to death or not. If the centaurs, goblins, or house elves catch a wizard that has wronged them then they have the right to prosecute them as they see fit."

Mr. Weasley said "It is a good plan to keep our options open. I will propose the law and it will be up to the Wizengamot to decide if the law passes or not. I personally do not believe in the death penalty so I will not endorse the law."

Harry nodded and said "I understand Minister. I just hope that you will feel the same way in the event that your family is attacked. I truly hope that that will never happen but during times of war there's no telling what will happen. During times of war, we also don't have the luxury to follow the clear cut rules set during times of peace."

Mr. Weasley responded "I also hope that I will not have to face that decision."

There was a moment of silence as everyone contemplated about their family and friends and hoping that they would never have to face that decision. Dumbledore asked "Harry, what are you going to do in response to the execution of the house elves?"

Harry thought about it for a moment and looked over at the goblins to say "I want all the assets of confirmed Death Eaters held at Gringott's frozen. The families of these groups will not be able to go to their vaults and will not be able to withdraw funds from their vaults."

Alpha responded "If we are to do that then we can almost guarantee an attack on the bank."

Harry nodded and said "I agree. After the Death Eaters find out that their bank accounts have been singled out to be frozen then we can almost count on an attack. An attack will probably be on the bank but there may be other simultaneous attacks during that time to cause confusion and divide our forces to increase their odds of winning. We also don't know what type of force they will use to come at us."

Ronan said "I agree. We may be able to hold off an attack on Hogwarts should that occur and aid in the defense of Hogsmeade but centaurs are not trained to fight in a crowded urban environment like Diagon Alley so we will not be able to help you there. We require more room to fight than Diagon Alley can provide."

Houseman said "The strike elves can mobilize about three battalions of 20 elves each to help in the defense and take rotating shifts to guard Gringott's. That will leave three battalions here to protect the Sanctuary but that leaves Potter Mansion unprotected."

Alpha said "Thank you Houseman. The strike elves and the goblins strike teams should be enough. We have fifty fighting goblins on standby at any moment at Gringott's. We can also call up the reserves of approximately one hundred more should it be necessary. Half of the reserves are already planned to move into the Sanctuary

tonight so that will give added protection here. I would like to keep the rest of the goblins from fighting and well rested should a long battle occur.”

Harry nodded and said “The three battalions of strike elves will move to rotation duty at Gringott’s for security. When the attack occurs, the centaurs will be mobilized to pull closer to Hogwarts castle to help protect it from a diversionary attack. The defense of the Sanctuary will be left to the strike elves, house elves, and goblins positioned here. Half of the Patriots will be moved here to support those that are living here and aid the wounded. The other half of the Patriots will be sent to patrol the castle. Kayla will be left as commander of the Patriots at Hogwarts. Ginny will be the commander at the Sanctuary and I will go to Gringott’s to help defend the bank.”

Ginny angrily said “Harry, I’m not leaving you to go fight at Gringott’s alone. I will be going with you.”

Harry turned to Ginny and said “I understand where you’re coming from Ginny but the Patriots and the Sanctuary will need a person to lead in its defense and to take care of the wounded. I promise that I will not do anything stupid and get back to you as quickly as possible.”

Ginny was about to say something but Dumbledore interrupted them by saying “I also object to you entering a battle and the Order would also like to offer its forces to help defend Gringott’s.”

Harry was relieved that Dumbledore was interrupting Ginny but knew that he would have to talk to her later. Harry said “I ask that the Order and Auror’s hold back to first defend the Ministry of Magic and St. Mungos. The responsibility of defending all diversionary Death eater attacks will lie with the Order and Auror’s. For me to enter battle, that is my responsibility and will help my friends in their fight. There’s nothing you can do to prevent me from going there so you might as well not try.”

There was more bickering about whether Harry should be at the defense of Gringott’s or not. The Alliance members broke up into smaller groups and discussed the matter as more and more magical

beings started to voice their opinions. Ginny and Harry broke away from everybody and sat as far away from everybody as possible and talked about it.

Ginny took Harry's hand and said "Love, I don't want you going into that fight especially without me there with you. We should be doing this together and not divided."

Harry nodded and said "I agree that we should be together but there is nobody that I trust more than you to watch over this place. It will be a while before we can let the orphans return to the orphanages especially since three of them need to be rebuilt. You are also great with healing and would be of great help here to help the wounded. I want to stand here with you also when the attacks occur but I can not order others to fight and stand back to do nothing."

Ginny looked pleadingly when she said "You can be here to help the wounded. I only know as much as I do about healing because of you."

Harry asked "What would it take for you to allow me to help the goblins?"

Ginny said "I don't want you going there in the first place but I understand your conviction to help your friends and allies. The only way for me to let you go is if you let me come with you."

Harry shook his head and said "I can't lead you into danger Gin."

Ginny replied "Just like I can't let you go into danger either. It's either the both of us go or neither of us go. If I have to, I'll tie you down and keep you locked up until the fight is over before I let you go."

Harry smiled, gave Ginny a kiss, and said "I love you Ginny and I might like that whole tying up bit but I need to go there and help. Please understand."

Ginny sighed "You can go only if I go and you know that I'll follow you anyway so you might as well plan on me being there."

Harry sighed as he thought about it for a second. He knew that Ginny would use her portkey to get to him just like he would to get to her. In the end, Harry relented and agreed that Ginny could come along which left Kayla in charge of the Sanctuary. The Alliance members calmed down as Harry called for Order and the new plans were discussed in details with much objections coming from the Ministry and the Order for being left out and putting so many students in danger. In the end, Harry got his way, the Order and the Ministry felt a little put out, and the plans were put into motion immediately once the meeting let out. Now, all the groups were playing a waiting game of wondering what Voldemort will do and when he will attack.

A/N: I just wanted to thank the reviewers and now to address some of your concerns or comments. Well, as you all know Ginny and Harry went through a bonding ceremony where they exchanged knowledge and created a stronger bond between them. As of right now, Ginny is not as strong as Harry though she knows everything that Harry knows because Harry's raw magic ability is still greater than Ginny's. As for the whole revenge for Hermione and Ron poisoning Harry: I'm not sure if Harry will seek revenge because the after affects was inadvertent and Harry now can kind of understand why they did it. Though I might have them do something that will be equivalent to revenge but that is not planned in the story as of now. I will add though that Dumbledore is not done with his job as a manipulator especially if the Death Penalty is going to be handed out by the Alliance. Thanks to those that offered to be my betas and I will keep you in mind but probably won't be necessary cause the story is winding down right now. I also wanted to make it clear that my message to my betas in the last chapter was not because I was displeased with them but I just wanted to check with them that's all because I send them chapters in large chunks so I usually go for extended periods of time without hearing from them and I haven't sent them the next set yet so I just wanted to check.

Here is something to keep in mind though for this story which I should have stated before just in case I didn't. Hogwarts has been going through years with no reliable professor in Defense Against the Dark Arts for years before and while Harry was at Hogwarts with the exception of Remus and the fake Moody but that was only two years. Added with it all the meddling from the Board of Governors and

Ministry of Magic in the years Harry have been at Hogwarts, it has been difficult for the students to maintain a stable learning environment. That is why Hogwarts is not performing like other magical schools. Also keep in mind that is part of the reason why Kayla seems so much better than the other students at Hogwarts. Add that with her own desire to learn and help Harry over the years and being the best student coming from her magical school in the states, it makes her seem like a super power but she really is not. Hogwarts has just fallen a little behind ever since Harry started that's all.

Chapter 36

Patriots vs. DA

The Order of the Phoenix hasn't been able to operate like it was prior to when Harry discovered that the Order was spying on him with his best friends. Most of them were still loyal to Dumbledore and this group saw him as a means to an end. If all they had to do was sacrifice Harry to end this war and finish off Voldemort once and for all, then it was worth the sacrifice. Others like Remus and Tonks were adamantly against using Harry like a tool but couldn't express their opinions many times because they were now excluded from the high priority meetings. There was one person that was on the ropes and had serious doubts was McGonagall. After her talk with Harry during detention, she voiced her concerns to Dumbledore but Dumbledore placated her telling her that there was more to the story than she knew. McGonagall reluctantly dropped her protest because of her trust in Dumbledore but wondered what it was that she was missing. In reality, if McGonagall knew the whole truth then she would be outraged at Dumbledore.

While Harry was busy with the Patriots and the Alliance, the DA under Hermione and Ron were busy training to catch up to the Patriots. The DA was learning new spells and defense techniques at an accelerated rate because of the support from the Order. The Order had assigned a few of its members like Mad Eye to help train the group. The DA's secondary objective is now protecting Hogwarts. Its primary objective is to spy and to contain Harry should the situation arise. What the DA didn't know during this time was that the house elves at Hogwarts were spying on the DA in return for Harry. Harry knew all of their plans. What the Order didn't know was that the unknown listening device set in Dumbledore's office was actually from Harry. He placed it there as a decoy should Dumbledore ever discover it but Dumbledore only realized that it was there when Harry showed everybody. Harry did this to distract the Order and take the focus off of him for a little while. He didn't even use the listening device and if Dumbledore managed to track down where the listening device was transmitting to then he would realize that it was sending the messages back to where Dumbledore hid the Sorcerer's Stone during Harry's first year.

Dumbledore called for a meeting at Grimmauld Place of all Order members that were on his side. During the meeting, there was a house elf hidden and silently listened to the on goings of the meeting so he could report back to Harry. When everybody was gathered, Dumbledore said "Thank you all for coming. We have urgent business to discuss as you all know from what happened this morning." He turned to Snape and asked "Severus, do you have any news to report of Voldemort?"

Snape said "This morning while the Alliance was meeting, the Dark Lord called for a meeting of all Death eaters. He informed us that the house elves that were executed belonged to Potter and was spying for him. If this is true, then there is no telling how much Potter knows about everything that the Dark Lord has planned so far. The Dark Lord has ordered the sweeping of his compound for all listening devices and stepped up his search for any moles as a result of those elves being discovered."

Dumbledore nodded and said "Thank you Severus. Mr. Potter has failed to inform the Order of his spy network and we have to wonder how extensive this network really is, that is why all the people present at this meeting are the ones that aligned themselves with me and not Mr. Potter. He has also either purposely or inadvertently let us know of the extent of the Alliance's military strength. I believe that there is more that he is not telling us about but for now the numbers that we do have make them just as strong as Voldemort in military power. It is more important now that we find a way to place him under our control and control his strike teams. He has also stated that he will assist the goblins in the defense of Gringott's should it be necessary and we must find a way to keep him from getting there."

Vance said "Albus, if we can keep him from assisting the goblins after he stated that he was going to help them than it would make him less credible in the eyes of the goblins. It might just be enough for us to get the support we need to take control of the Alliance and Potter at the same time."

McGonagall interjected "That would be good for the Order but will it be good for the cause and for Mr. Potter. He is the leader of the Alliance of Magic and attempting a coup could break everything off to

where we were prior to the Alliance with each group fighting for themselves.”

Dumbledore said “That will just be a risk that we will have to take. As you all know, Mr. Potter is the most important piece in the puzzle to defeating Voldemort and we need to control that piece as much as possible.”

McGonagall replied “This isn’t right. Mr. Potter went from a person when he was born to a tool in your plans Albus. Now he is reduced to a piece in a puzzle. You can’t treat a person like that. If you continue to do this then you can count on Mr. Potter retaliating even more against the Order.”

Dumbledore replied “You are losing sight of the big picture Minerva. Mr. Potter must be controlled for his own good and for the good of the wizarding world. He can send the Alliance to attack us at any moment and we would probably not survive the fight if we had to deal with both the Alliance and Voldemort.”

McGonagall heatedly said “I can’t believe that you’re equating Potter with Voldemort. You are making him seem like the next Dark Lord.”

Dumbledore calmly replied “That is exactly what I am doing. Voldemort is a dangerous opponent as we all can see from what he has been doing. I believe that Mr. Potter will be of greater threat than Voldemort should he go dark. He has the loyalty of many of the more influential magical communities in England and his popularity grows with every passing day. Power can corrupt and I don’t believe that Mr. Potter can stand the pressure that comes with being a leader much longer before he is corrupted by it. Today could be the first steps of his corruption, just look at what he asked Arthur to do. He asks the Ministry to allow him to execute people.”

McGonagall replied “In that respect, I agree with Potter. We should leave our options open and some Death eaters are better off dead than kept in prison, like Lestrange. I don’t think that he is capable of being corrupt. You have sent him to live in a family of hate and he grew up most of his life knowing only neglect yet he stills shows

compassion to those who are hurt and offer his assistance to those that need help.”

Dumbledore said “We have discussed the matter of Mr. Potter’s living arrangements already. It was for his safety and to make it easier for us to keep an eye on him.”

McGonagall heatedly said “Yes we have discussed Potter’s living situations many time and I still hold my objection to you always sending him back there. At least now he has a place to go and you can not force him to move back with the Dursley’s.”

Dumbledore sighed then said “That brings up another point that we must talk about. We have to find a way to get him to return to the Dursley’s for the summer again but that is for another time. We have more pressing matters at this time. We need to discuss how to contain Mr. Potter and stop him from joining the fight at Gringott’s.”

Vance interjected “How is the progress with the DA? If they are strong enough then we can send them on Potter and that should distract him long enough and maybe even beat him and his group.”

Dumbledore replied “The word so far is that the DA is progressing very well. The group is extremely proficient in their spell work and their abilities are showing in their class work. They have been doing very well but the question is the strength of the Patriots.”

One of the Aurors that helps train the DA said “The DA is trained by experienced Aurors while the Patriots are trained by Potter. Plus the DA has been running multiple practice sessions a week. There is no way that they could be beyond the abilities of the DA. As far as I can tell, the Patriots outnumber us but not by much unless there is something big that we don’t know about because when Harry had the students choose their loyalty he had them choose between you, the Ministry, and him. Unless the Ministry received close to no supporters then we should be able to take Potter.”

Dumbledore nodded and said “Alright, I expect the Death eaters to attack soon because they won’t last long without their money to finance their cause. Get the DA assembled and ready to fight by

tomorrow night. I'll call for a faculty meeting at that time so most of the professors will be out of the way and put some privacy spells up so that nobody will be able to contact us during that time period. The DA will have one hour to contain the Patriots."

McGonagall was outraged and exclaimed "You all can't be serious about having the students fight with each other. The DA was meant to protect not go picking fights and Potter has not failed to live up to any of his promises or potential. I'm warning you all, if you send the DA into a fight with the Patriots then you will have the entire student population split into a civil war."

Dumbledore replied calmly "This is the best we can come up to contain Mr. Potter. It is more important to have Mr. Potter safe and contained then to have him dead. If he dies then our cause is lost from the beginning."

McGonagall shook her head and said "Albus, you know that I am loyal to you but I object to what you are doing here. I will not say anything to anyone about your plans here but I will have no part of this. Good day." McGonagall left Grimmauld Place and headed back to Hogwarts.

The meeting continued after she left, on strategies for the DA to take on Harry. When the meeting was over, Harry's house elf spy returned to Hogwarts to deliver the warning and the Order's plan to use the DA. The house elf also informed Harry about how McGonagall stood up for him. Harry was mad when he heard the news and immediately called for the Patriots to assemble to develop a counter attack but more specifically a trap to teach the DA a lesson. Since the DA was not a secret group, all of its members were known and their lesson plan was known to the rest of the school. What the Order and the DA didn't know was that the Patriots was at least one year ahead in their dueling abilities because of Harry's use of transfiguration in their training.

The next day during dinner, Dumbledore stood up and said "I need to call a special meeting of the faculty in my office after dinner. All detentions will be rescheduled tomorrow by your heads of house."

That was the cue for everybody to get ready for the fireworks to start. Harry knew all of their plans so he decided to use Dumbledore's cues to alert his team of what was going on. The DA were all wearing their uniforms because it helped in protecting you during a duel but the uniforms were charmed to look like the regular Hogwarts robes. The charm was set to wear off about half an hour after dinner ended. When Dumbledore finished his speech, the students took that as the command that dinner was over also. Everybody left the Great Hall but the Patriots went to hide around the castle to disillusion themselves and returned to the Great Hall and took up their positions around the Hall. The Gryffindor members of the Patriots accompanied Harry to Gryffindor Tower and waited there for a message that was supposed to arrive from Dumbledore requesting his assistance in the Great Hall.

The group was in the common room for fifteen minutes before the message arrived. Normally, Harry would question why Dumbledore was asking him to meet in the Great Hall considering that Dumbledore was holding a meeting in his office. Hermione and Ron also received a set of rebuttal statements in the event that Harry should question the message but Harry decided to play along and not question the letter and act like he just forgot that the faculty was meeting in Dumbledore's office.

The DA was set to follow two minutes after Harry left and ambush him while he was in the Great Hall. They also expected to fight against Ginny and Kayla because the two were always with Harry but the DA was counting on the fact that the rest of the Patriots will not know about the attack until it was too late. Harry made his way down to the Great Hall and the trio did some quick transfiguration and illusion work to set the environment up in favor of the Patriots.

Almost immediately after Harry, Ginny, and Kayla finished setting up their trap, the DA showed up dressed in an altered uniform of the Order. The uniforms did not carry the markings of the Order but was the same outfit none the less. The trio walked up to Hermione and Harry knowingly asked "Did Dumbledore call you down here also?"

Hermione replied "Harry, the DA is here to help secure you and keep you from entering into a fight when the Death eaters decide to attack Gringott's."

Harry, Ginny, and Kayla pulled out their wands and slowly backed away from the DA. This resulted in the DA pulling out their wands and pointing it at Harry and slowly following Harry further into the center of the Great Hall.

Ron said “Harry, we know that you’re good at dueling but you can’t expect to take the entire DA on. We outnumber you ten to one. Lower your wand and swear that you will not go help the goblins fight.”

Harry shook his head and taunted “I admit that Ginny, Kayla, and I will probably have a difficult time taking on the entire DA but you all know that I like challenges. After all, I don’t expect you to last very long in a duel, considering your training is no where near what the three of us have gone through.”

Ron heatedly replied “This is your last warning; if you all don’t lower your wands then we will have to teach you a lesson.”

Ginny angrily said “You would actually help in the attack of your own sister.”

Ron replied “We won’t have to do anything if you just surrender. I don’t want to attack the three of you but I will if it is what I have to do to make sure that you three are safe.”

Kayla spat “Since when do you care about our safety. You’re nothing more than Dumbledore’s laky sent here to do his dirty work.”

During this entire time, a Patriot slipped behind the DA and got ready to close the doors to the Great Hall. The DA was still being sucked into the center of the Great Hall and was bunched up with each other which left them fairly defenseless against the attack that was going to happen. The doors to the Great Hall slammed closed which startled the DA. The DA was tense as it is at the prospect of having to fight against Harry, Ginny, and Kayla so a few of them inadvertently fired off a few stunning spells at the trio.

This resulted in Ginny and Kayla stepping forward to summon shielding charms around the three of them. Harry pulled out a thin

strip of white paper with Chinese characters on it and used the trick that Kayla had taught him. Harry's shield shot around to protect the trio as more and more spells were shot at them. Ginny gave the rest of the Patriots the signal with a shot of white mist coming from her wand making a misty cloud behind Harry's shield.

The Patriots dropped their disillusionment charms and the illusions that were in the Great Hall. The Patriots were standing on two sides of the Great Hall where the two center long table would usually be. The long tables were transfigured into four feet tall white stone walls that ran the length of the Great Hall.

Quickly after dropping the disillusionment charms, the Patriots were keeping their eyes closed as the first spell they shot together was the 'lumos' spell to generate an extremely bright light that temporarily blinded the DA. The DA was shooting stunning spells around aimlessly in fear of getting hit while the Patriots were shooting carefully aimed bludgeoning spells from behind the protection of the stone walls. The Patriots wanted to teach the DA not to ambush one of their own and especially not their leader.

The fight didn't last more than five minutes because the DA was unorganized, over confident, and confused when the fighting started. When Harry called for a cease fire, every member of the DA was on the ground nursing at least one broken bone. Most of them were nursing multiple wounds. The lucky ones were the ones with a broken leg because when their leg broke they fell to the ground and weren't hit by more bludgeoning spells. The DA was on the ground moaning and many of them were bleeding due to broken head wounds or bones that broke the skin.

The Patriots levitated the fallen DA members and took them to the hospital wing while the rest of them cleaned up the Great Hall. When everything was done, every bed in the hospital wing was taken up along with a few conjured cots. The Great Hall looked like nothing has happened in it since dinner that evening and most of the Patriots went back to their dormitories to rest. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla were the only three Patriots up because they were waiting for the Order's response in particular Dumbledore's response.

Harry took a note from Ron and delivered it to Dumbledore by the designated house elf. Ron's letter was a message written by Dumbledore that said Ron was to have a house elf deliver when the fighting was over and that everything was taken care of. There were two letters, one that said that Harry peacefully surrendered and the other one was Harry was defeated and is in the hospital wing. Harry sent the message while in the hospital wing.

While all of this was going on, in Dumbledore's office, the faculty and staff were just finished assembling. Dumbledore said "I must apologize because I asked you all here under false pretense. The real reason why all of you are here is because the DA has been sent to handle a situation with Mr. Potter."

Remus jumped up and heatedly asked "What situation with Harry?"

Dumbledore said "As many of you know, Harry has already expressed his opinion where he is going to be when the fight at Gringott's takes place. The Order has decided that we can not allow him to help the goblins so the DA was dispatched to convince him not to leave Hogwarts."

Remus angrily asked "When did the Order decide this? What is the DA supposed to do?"

Dumbledore calmly replied "The Order had a meeting yesterday. I did not need all of the Order members present just a few advisors so that is why the entire Order was not called to a meeting."

Tonks spat "Of course, the only Order members that would be there are the ones that will follow you around blindly. I'm more than sure that Harry will teach the DA a lesson." Remus and Tonks got up to leave.

Dumbledore waved his hands and the door to his office closed. Dumbledore said "I'm sorry but I can not let you go warn Mr. Potter. As far as I can tell the situation between Mr. Potter and the DA is underway. A message will be delivered to us if we were successful or not."

Remus exclaimed "I hope that Harry teaches your little Army a lesson. You still did not answer my question. What is the DA ordered to do?"

Dumbledore replied "They are instructed to ask Harry to surrender and if he does not surrender then they are to use what ever force necessary to get him to listen to them even if it lands him in the hospital wing."

Remus' eyes went wide and yelled "How dare you do that to another student! Open that door now!"

Snape said "There's nothing you can do about it Lupin. It is probably going to end up in an ambush of about ten to one so the fight should probably end quickly."

Remus and Tonks pulled out their wands and fired different spells at the door in an attempt to open it but they were not successful. Shortly after Snape's comment a house elf popped into the office and handed Dumbledore a letter. Dumbledore sighed then said, "It appears that the conflict is over and Mr. Potter is in the hospital wing."

Dumbledore waved his hand and the door opened up. Remus was about to yell at Dumbledore but was grabbed by Tonks and the two of them sped off to the Hospital Wing. The rest of the staff quickly followed with Snape hiding his smile or in his case a smirk at best thinking about Harry being in the hospital wing at the hands of those that he once trained.

When they made it to the hospital wing, it was not the scene that they expected. The group expected a single occupied bed with Harry in it and probably Ginny and Kayla at his side but what they saw was like a military field hospital after a battle. Many of the students were still moaning as Madame Pomfrey ran from student to student and still didn't get a chance to see all the students yet.

When Madame Pomfrey saw the professors she was yelling at them to help her and care for the critically wounded first. Professor Flitwick, McGonagall, Snape, and Sprout went to tend the critically wounded students while Remus and Tonks went to search if Harry was there. Dumbledore went searching for either Ron or Hermione to find out

what happened. The rest of the professors were not proficient in healing charms so they took care of the less severe cases.

Dumbledore found Hermione and Ron lying in two beds next to each other in the back of the infirmary. Dumbledore asked "Ms. Granger, Mr. Weasley, what happened?"

Hermione responded "It was an ambush sir. We walked right into a trap. It was like Harry knew what was going to happen."

Ron exclaimed "Potter's a little cheater. He can't fight us straight up so he decided to ambush us."

Hermione was going to respond to Ron's remarks about how they were trying to ambush Harry but Dumbledore stopped her by raising his hand and asking "Tell me what happened."

Hermione told Dumbledore exactly what happened and the confused state that the DA was fighting in. Even she didn't realize that she was surrounded until it was too late. Hermione had a broken wand arm and two broken ribs which took her down. Ron had two broken ribs, a broken wand arm, and a broken leg. After talking to a few more people, Dumbledore realized that the Patriots were fighting with precision and that most of the DA was nursing broken wand arms. The few that didn't have broken wand arms are believed to have fallen early in the battle and either fainted or knocked out when they were hit with spells.

Dumbledore was not happy at how everything was turning out. He saw about thirty of his students injured and none of Harry's group was present. Dumbledore also knew that Harry must have had a spy in the Order's inner circle or had some method to listen in on their meetings. Dumbledore started to make plans to move the Order's headquarters to another location but he didn't know where. The only place possible was the Burrow but that would be too obvious.

Dumbledore assembled most of the Order along with those that worked at Hogwarts in his office. A message was sent to Harry to come to his office. Harry, Ginny, and Kayla were whistling as they made their way to the Headmaster's office and decided that they

were going to do whatever they can to aggravate the old man and all of his followers who were present.

This time, the trio was greeted at the steps to the Headmaster's office by Remus and Tonks. Harry smiled at the two of them and said "It's a nice night tonight isn't it Moony. How are you tonight Tonks?"

Remus and Tonks were furious with Dumbledore but when Harry showed up smiling Remus and Tonks got a little suspicious. Remus asked "What's wrong with you Harry? You act like nothing happened tonight."

Harry replied "I just did some house cleaning tonight that's all. You know, sometimes I can see why the house elves like to clean so much."

Remus and Tonks smiled at the subtle message. Ginny mockingly said "We shouldn't keep our beloved Headmaster waiting. We wouldn't want to lose points like last time especially since the house cup is on the line."

The group smiled at each other and made their way up to the Headmaster's office. They were greeted by a somber Dumbledore, an indifferent McGonagall although it seemed like she was proud, an outraged Snape, and upset Order members. Tonks, Remus, Harry, Ginny, and Kayla sat as far away from everybody else as possible all of which were wearing large broad smiles.

Dumbledore said "Mr. Potter was sending all of those students to the Hospital Wing really necessary?"

Harry replied "It's not my fault that they're in the Hospital Wing. They need to pay more attention to their surroundings." He turned to Ginny and asked, "What are those words that we were supposed to live by?"

Ginny was acting like she was thinking for a while then looked at Mad Eye when she said "Constant Vigilance!"

Moody smirked and nodded his agreement. Moody was disappointed that so many students were in the hospital wing but was pleased that Harry had lead his group in a successful attack. Moody was sympathetic towards Harry but didn't voice his opinion openly. He decided to sit back and just watch the show between Harry and Dumbledore instead.

Dumbledore sighed and asked "Why did you send the DA to the hospital wing?"

Harry decided to attack the Auror's that were training the DA and replied "Professor, you should really figure out a way to teach that group better. If I didn't know better it would seem like a group of students teaching each other. Maybe you should bring in Aurors to teach them. But then it could be embarrassing to have students trained by Aurors and have them lose to a group of self training students."

Dumbledore asked "Mr. Potter, why did you have to hurt the students that badly?"

Ginny responded for Harry. She said "The DA was ordered by the Order of the Phoenix to ambush Harry and to take out the Patriots should it become necessary. We, the Patriots, take threats to our members seriously and will defend each other at all costs. The DA was taught a lesson tonight that they will never be comparable to the Patriots even with their incompetent training from Ministry Aurors. The Order seems to like to underestimate Harry and yet, he probably faced Voldemort and Death eaters more than most of the Order itself."

Snape angrily said "You will treat the Headmaster with respect."

Harry said in a cold calm voice "Don't ever talk to Ginny like that again. If you do then we'll just have to remind you and your minions about our little detention session won't we. This time we won't play as nice. Don't you dare try to cross us with your self righteous prejudicial behavior. This goes for both the Order and the DA."

Snape paled at the thought of having to go through another week of humiliation and was about to retort but Dumbledore cut him off by saying "Mr. Potter, it does not help your cause by threatening the Order and the DA. We must work together."

Harry turned his cold calm voice to Dumbledore and said "I agree we should work together. That is why you were allowed into the Alliance of Magic as advisors but you all were the ones that provoked this attack. I will hold back or at least try to hold back the Alliance from retaliating against the Order and the DA for attacking Alliance members but the next time this happens, I will stand by and watch them tear this place apart."

Most of the people in the room gasped at what Harry just said. Everybody in the room knew that what happened tonight were Harry and the Patriots defending each other. They were just divided on whether the defense and attack was justified on all parties involved. Harry stood up and as a result Kayla, Ginny, Remus, and Tonks also stood up. Harry said "You are all warned. We defended ourselves tonight and your pathetic army couldn't stop us. Next time we won't be so merciful and you all know that what happened tonight was no accident. Now, I believe that it is late so we will take our leave."

The group made their way out of the office. As they left, Remus and Tonks gave each other a look and said together "We quit the Order of the Phoenix." They didn't want to quit working at Hogwarts because they wanted to be near Harry. The people left in the Headmasters office sighed as they all knew that they lost once again and now the price will be extremely high if they dare try to do it again.

A/N: Thank you to all those that review. Well, now to address some of your concerns or questions. The progress of Harry and Ginny's relationship is a subtle one at this point that is a bit difficult to pick up. They are getting closer as they spend most of their time together but don't anticipate them to have sex in this story. Sorry for those that want this to happen, but in the scheme of things, their relationship is fairly new but the first steps to get to sex is cuddling together in bed. Which they are way past that point to half way to all out sex just for those who are curious. I also know the flow in the story is not as it used to be because I'm not having as much time to write the chapters

due to school and the amount of planning for these chapters. I will try to work on it but I can't promise anything.

Chapter 37

Alliance vs. Death Eaters

It took a while for the Death Eaters to realize that their bank accounts were frozen. Many of them did not realize until the weekend when they tried to do some shopping. Most of the Death Eaters believed that their bank accounts being frozen were isolated cases until somebody starting talking about it after Death Eater meetings. When they started to talk to each other, they realized that they were being targeted and when word reached Voldemort about what was going on, he knew that the goblins had sided with the light.

Voldemort was furious because he was in the middle of negotiations with the goblins but the goblins were just leading him on. Voldemort spent time that night torturing more of his Death Eaters but not as severely as last time. Voldemort instructed Bellatrix to come up with a plan for a large scale attack on Gringott's and possibly have this attack as the crippling attack on the wizarding community.

Bellatrix planned for simultaneous attacks on Gringott's, the Ministry of Magic, and Hogwarts. Gringott's was important because that was where the economic center for wizards in Great Britain lies. The fall of the Ministry of Magic would cause widespread chaos and the fall of Hogwarts would strike fear into everyone's heart because it was suppose to be the safest place in the world. Every available resource was going to be used in this attack. Because of a spy finding out their plans last time, Bellatrix only let Voldemort and his inner circle know of their plans which left Snape out of the loop. Everybody else would be notified just prior to the attack with the added exception of those necessary to move their forces in the right location. It was planned that Gringott's would be attacked first to draw the Aurors away from the Ministry. The Ministry of Magic was set to be attacked next to draw out the Order and the remaining Aurors to leave the last target vulnerable which was Hogwarts. It was all staged with each attack starting half an hour after the previous attack. In summary, this will be the first Death Eater attack since the Alliance was assembled that the Alliance would have no clue as to what was going to happen.

It was two o'clock in the morning in mid march when Harry started to receive an urgent message through his watch and by house elves

trying to wake him up. Harry was trying to get the sleep out of his eyes as he tried to get up and see what was going on. A house elf was shaking Harry's shoulders and yelling, "Harry Potter sir, wake up!"

Harry slowly got up and asked, "What's going on? Why are you here?"

The house elf said, "Gringott's is under attack!"

Harry became fully alert as his adrenaline kicked in. Harry started rushing around to put on his Patriots battle robes while sending urgent messages to all of the members of the Alliance and to the Patriots. In less than five minutes, members of the Patriots that belonged to Gryffindor House were rushing into Harry's room dressed and ready to fight. The group rushed down to the Chamber of Secrets so Harry could issue his last commands before he left to go help the goblins.

While all of this was going on, house elves across England were instructed to notify key members of what was going on like Mr. Weasley and Dumbledore. Dumbledore woke up to find a note on his desk in his office from Snape that said he was called away to a meeting. Dumbledore received Harry's message and immediately called the Order to meet at Grimmauld Place. The Ministry of Magic's high ranking officials and all on and off duty Aurors were notified to show up at the Ministry of Magic as soon as possible. The Order and Ministry knew their roles in this attack.

Down in the Chamber Harry sent half of his team to the Sanctuary and the rest on patrols at Hogwarts. The orders were to stay inside the Sanctuary or the castle and if an attack was going to come then prepare to fight at the entrances to the castle because that would be where the bottleneck will occur for the Death Eaters who want to charge into the castle.

Harry and Ginny used Harry's portkey to go to Gringott's. The two showed up in the middle of Gringott's main reception area. There were four groups of 30 goblins dressed in dark blue standing in formation awaiting the command to charge out of the main doors to

the bank or to repel an attack that should make it through the main doors. The house elves were all standing to the side behind where the bank tellers usually stand. They were also lined up in formation ready to assist the goblins should the front doors be breached. Alpha and Houseman were near the rear of the bank behind the goblins talking when Harry and Ginny approached them.

Harry calmly asked them, "What's the situation here?"

The group was looking at a miniature size replica of Diagon Alley. The goblins started work on the replica when they realized that there was a possibility that they were going to be attacked. They created the miniature Diagon Alley to help them coordinate and plan attack and defense strategies.

Alpha calmly replied, "We have approximately 150 goblins ready to fight. 120 of them are here in the reception area while 30 of them are on patrols down in the caves. There are approximately 100 strike elves ready to support the goblins should it be necessary."

Houseman calmly carried on where Alpha left off, "We haven't engaged the attacking force yet. There is an estimated 90 Death Eaters out there along with 100 Dementors waiting to assist them and what we think are five Hungarian Horntails. Voldemort appears bent on taking Gringott's."

Harry was surprised that Voldemort sent that big of an attack force to Diagon Alley. Harry asked, "The two of you know the fighting abilities of the strike elves and goblins the best. What strategies have you two come up with?"

Alpha replied, "We were thinking of deploying the strike elves on the rooftops that line Diagon Alley. About five elves per roof top gives us about 20 rooftops and we wanted them on both sides of the street so we're looking at a defense range of about ten stores away from Gringott's. The strike elves' responsibility will be to attack the Death Eaters and Dementors from the rooftops and intercept the dragons should they get too close to Diagon Alley. The second part of our defense is the goblins. Approximately fifty goblins will charge out from the main doors of Gringott's and intercept the attacking force head on.

When the fifty goblins have established some ground then fifty more goblins will be sent out to reinforce them and push back the Death Eaters. That leaves 20 goblins that will run medical aid for the elves and goblins.”

Harry nodded and said, “What about the two of you? Where will you all be?”

Houseman replied, “We will be coordinating the attacks from here. When the strike elves and goblins take their places then they will show up on the replica of Diagon Alley that we created. We will be able to redirect forces if necessary.”

Harry nodded and with an air of confidence said, “You two are in charge of the defense. I will lead the goblins attack.”

Alpha shook his head and said, “We would prefer if you stayed inside Gringott’s with us. We don’t want to risk your life in the defense if we can avoid it.”

Harry shook his head then said, “I believe that I can aid the cause best if I was out on the battlefield. Besides, I will be able to give and change commands out in the field should it become necessary. I have sworn to protect the goblins and elves. Therefore, I will fight along them on the battlefield because I can’t let them fight while I stand here and watch.”

Alpha nodded and said, “If that is the case then five goblins will stay with you to help protect you. It is a total mess out there and from what we were told. The London resistance has just engaged our foes and is not doing very well. The resistance did not have the numbers necessary to engage the enemy.”

Harry nodded then said, “Then we should hurry up and get out there to help them.”

Ginny took Harry’s hand, looked in him in his eyes, and determinedly said, “I’m going to fight along side you Harry. There’s nothing you can say that will stop me from doing it so don’t try to argue with me.”

Harry sighed in resignation because he knew that Ginny wasn't going to allow him to go out there all by himself. Harry gave her hand a squeeze, turned to Alpha, and said, "Send a security detail to help protect Ginny..."

Ginny was about to interrupt him but Harry shook his head and said, "If I'm getting a security detail to help protect me then so are you."

Ginny nodded and the two Gryffindors went to stand in front of the goblins ready to charge out the front doors. Harry and Ginny pulled out their rose wands and stood ready to charge with ten goblins coming up to flank them. The command to attack was once the strike elves left and took up their positions. A moment later, Houseman and Alpha yelled out, "Attack!"

The house elves disappeared, the front doors to Gringott's opened up, and Harry led the charge out into the streets of Diagon Alley. The security detail's whose job was to protect Harry and Ginny knocked the two of them down to the ground. Harry was about to say something when he saw hundreds of spells shoot out from Gringott's into the streets of Diagon Alley. Harry turned to look at Diagon Alley and saw about 40 Death Eaters fall to the ground as they were stunned. The rest of the Death Eaters managed to dodge the attack, summon a shield, or were standing behind a Death Eater that got stunned. The goblins counter attack was a surprise which was the only reason why so many Death Eaters had fallen. The Death Eaters that didn't get stunned were either trying to stand back up or were trying to revive their fallen comrades.

Harry saw as the Death Eaters were trying to revive their fallen friends, the strike elves were showering spells down on the Death Eaters from above the stores. He also saw the Dementors make their attack down the center of Diagon Alley. Harry and Ginny quickly stood up and summoned the happiest thoughts in their lives. At that moment, the two of them were holding each other's hands and thought about the night of the ball when they had their first kiss together. As if they knew what the other person was going to do, they raised their rose wands and yelled, "Expecto Patronum!"

A silver mist erupted from the two wands and a large silver misty shield as tall as Harry and running the length between the wands. When the shield finished forming, four figures busted out from the wall. White corporal forms of Prongs, Padfoot, Moony, and Harry's phoenix form shot out from the silver shield and charged down the Dementors. The Dementors were stunned when they saw the shield and many of them knew what was about to happen. The four patronus forms ripped into the Dementors when they were within range. Padfoot was biting, Prongs slashed with his antlers, Moony was clawing, and Harry was gauging with his beak. The Dementors let out sickening screams as they were being killed. With the death of each Dementor there was a glitter of lights that spiraled towards the heavens. The glitters were different souls that were finally freed from the Dementors. The Dementors were not used to being killed and when they saw ten of their numbers go down, the rest of them tried to make their escape but only a handful managed to get away because Harry and Ginny's patroni continued to chase down the Dementors.

While Harry and Ginny were holding their concentration on their patronus forms the goblins assigned to the two of them were standing in a circle around the two and taking turns casting overlapping shield charms to protect the duo. After fifteen minutes the patroni disappeared right before the silver shield turned to vapor and disappeared. When the patroni disappeared, the Dementors continued their retreat in fear of having to face a second round of Harry and Ginny's different guardians.

The fighting was brutal as many Death Eaters took to using explosion hexes when attacking the strike elves. The strike elves didn't have much room to run and many of them fell from the rooftops or died from being too close to the impacts. The command was sent for the remaining elves to pull to ground level and fight alongside the goblins because it was too dangerous for them to stay up there. The goblins were rushing at the Death Eaters head on with no fear. Many of them were instantly killed as several death curses were hurled at the charging goblins.

Once the goblins broke into the Death Eaters ranks, about 30 goblins were lying dead on the ground and many of them still had blood flowing from their body because after they fell, some of the Death

Eaters thought it would be fun to mutilate the bodies with cutting hexes. Anarchy broke out on the streets of Diagon Alley as the London resistance was regrouping but was attacked by the low flying dragons that just entered into the fighting. The dragons attacked in a 'V' formation and lit up Diagon Alley with flames with disregard between friend and foe. Nightlight, Sunrise, and Sunset showed up and charged at the farthest dragon using a distraction style strategy which turned the dragons on each other. Bellatrix didn't send Death Eaters to drive the dragons but merely released the five hungry Hungarian Horntails on Diagon Alley. When one dragon would try to shoot flames or use its tail to hit the phoenixes, the phoenixes would use their fire flight abilities and disappear near another dragon. As a result the flames or the tail of one dragon would hit another and the two dragons would fight each other. When two of the dragons were finally taken down, the strike elves assisted the phoenixes by jointly shooting spells together so that it would have a greater effect.

Down on the streets, Harry and Ginny were facing off with four unknown Death Eaters. The Death Eaters repeated slashing motions that sent purple spells at the two Gryffindors. The Gryffindors repeated the use of the protego shield while jumping around on the ground just in case a spell did manage to break through their shields. After a minute of dodging spells, one of the Death Eaters hesitated, this gave Harry just enough time to go on the offensive. Harry fired off the precision bone and joint breaking spell that the Patriots used when they attacked the DA. The light blue spell hit one Death Eater in the wrist of the same hand that he was holding his wand. The Death Eater yelled in pain and Harry proceeded to break the Death Eaters other wrist and his ankles so he couldn't pick up another wand or escape.

After beating the Death Eater, Harry turned around to see that Ginny managed to get the two Death Eaters that were attacking her to turn their backs to him. Harry fired two explosion hexes to their backs which blew apart some of the Death Eaters skin and muscle revealing part of their backbone as the Death Eater fell to the ground in pain. When the two Death Eaters fell, Ginny fired a cutting hex just above Harry's shoulder hitting the Death Eater behind Harry who was about to fire a spell at Harry's back.

After defeating the four Death Eaters, a goblin ran up to Harry and urgently said, "Mr. Harry Potter, Alpha needs to talk to you now. He says that it is important."

Harry nodded as he and Ginny followed the goblin back to Gringott's. When they arrived inside of the bank, they saw ten goblins and ten strike elves standing guard over five Death Eaters that were taken prisoner. The five Death Eaters were sitting in the middle of the lobby in high back chairs that were uncomfortable. Their hands and legs were bound to the chair and all of them looked fairly beaten up with their robes ripped to shreds and blood dripping from various parts of their body.

Upon seeing the two Gryffindors enter the bank. Alpha approached them and calmly said, "We captured these five Death Eaters to try to get some information on if there were other attacks going on at the same time. We managed to shove some truth serum down their throats and they admitted that there were two other known attacks that were going to happen tonight."

Houseman came up and said with disgust, "It looks like all of these attacks were designed by Bellatrix Lestrange. The other attacks were to happen half an hour each other. The first was Gringott's, the second was the Ministry which just started, and the last known one will be Hogwarts."

Ginny took Harry's hand when she heard the words Hogwarts because of Kayla and Ministry because her dad and brother's were probably going to be there to help her dad defend the Ministry. Harry worriedly asked, "How are the situation here and the Ministry?"

Alpha calmly replied, "When we found out that there were two other attacks planned, we deployed a few strike elves to survey the scenes at both locations. Gringott's and Diagon Alley were set up to take the worst of all the fighting which is proving to be true. At last count we lost 62 goblins and 55 strike elves. The London resistance lost a total of 41 witches and wizards. We managed to capture 22 Death Eaters and kill or injure 30 more. All of the Dementors either escaped or were killed and the dragons are all too injured to fight anymore. The

dragons are pretty much lying defenseless on the grounds and if we can get to them, they are being killed by use of swords and axes.”

Harry nodded and motioned for Alpha to continue. Alpha continued on by saying, “All Ministry Aurors and the Order of the Phoenix have shown up to defend the Ministry of Magic building. When we were assembling our teams here to fight, they were assembling in preparation for an attack. Apparently, things are not going the way the Death Eaters wanted because they did not expect such a large force at the Ministry because some of the Aurors were supposed to be dispatched here. The Ministry is facing about 50 Death Eaters and 7 giants. I don’t expect them to have too much trouble once they eliminate the giants.”

Harry sighed, turned to Ginny, and apologetically said, “Gin, I’m going to need you to go back to Hogwarts and help Kayla defend the castle.”

The fire returned in Ginny’s eyes as her temper rose thinking that Harry would honestly believe that she would leave him by himself on the battlefield. She heatedly said, “Harry, I’m not going to leave you here all by yourself. If I’m going back then you’re coming with me.”

Harry shook his head and calmly said, “Gin, they’re going to need our help at Hogwarts especially since all of the teachers have left or at least the majority of the teachers have left Hogwarts to defend the Ministry. I’m pretty sure that they don’t know about the planned attack on Hogwarts. I’ll be there soon. I just want to help clean up here a bit but one of us should go back and help coordinate the defense of the castle and the Sanctuary.”

Ginny’s temper continued to rise because she did not want to leave Harry by himself and she angrily replied, “You can coordinate the attack from here with your watch. I’m not going to leave you and there’s nothing you can do about it.”

Harry took Ginny’s hand continued in his calm voice in an effort to calm Ginny down said, “Yes, I can coordinate the defense through my watch but it would not be as efficient as being there in person. There’s nothing to worry about here, you heard Alpha and Houseman

say that the things are starting to get under control here. I'll return once the attack on the castle begins but I need you to command the Hogwarts side while Kayla maintains the Sanctuary and coordinates the care for the injured. Please Gin, if anything I personally prefer that you stayed here because it will be much safer here when the attack at Hogwarts start but I know that there is nothing that I can do to stop you from defending the castle and fighting beside me."

Ginny didn't like want to leave Harry but knew that he was right. She managed to calm down and say, "Alright Harry, I'll go but you better not try to play the hero and do something stupid." She paused and continued with a serious look she said, "What do you have planned for the defense of Hogwarts?"

Harry was silent for a moment as he thought about a plan to defend the castle. Harry looked and Alpha and Houseman who were looking at Harry expectantly then everyone looked out at the battle that was going on out on Diagon Alley. He sighed and regretfully said, "I think that we're going to need lots of help and that includes the strike elves and goblins."

Houseman nodded and said, "It is understandable Harry Potter sir. We need to work together and if we manage to give a devastating blow to the Death Eaters at Hogwarts then we have pretty much decimated You-Know-Who's forces especially if the Ministry fighting is going as well as we hope. The house elves are always here to help."

Alpha nodded in agreement with Houseman and continued off where Houseman said by saying, "The goblins agree too. We can finish this together then there will be plenty of time to heal afterwards."

Harry nodded and looked at Houseman and Alpha when he said "Thank you for all your help." He turned to look at Ginny and said, "Here's the plan..."

After hearing the plan, Ginny shook her head and exclaimed, "Harry, there is no way I'm going to let you do that!"

Harry pleaded with her saying, "I'll be fine. I'll be there with some help. Besides you're going to be there with me shortly after I show up." Harry knew that he better come out of this fight safe and unharmed or else Ginny would kill him. Ginny ended up relenting and decided to head back to Hogwarts to organize the defense and to let the Patriots know the plan.

After Ginny left, Harry turned to Alpha and asked, "Alright, you heard the plan for the defense of Hogwarts. Do you know what the strength of the enemy's attack team at Hogwarts?"

Alpha nodded and said, "The odds are in our favor at Hogwarts. There will only be 30 Death Eaters storming the castle. They are counting on the students not being awake yet and the teachers leaving which means the only things really protecting the castle are the wards which have been broken before and will probably be broken again."

Houseman interjected, "With the centaurs and the Patriots waiting to setup the trap, we shouldn't have problems defending the castle unless something changes that we don't know about."

Harry nodded and after a little more talking about the elves and goblins that will be coming with Harry to defend Hogwarts, he headed back out to the battle to survey the damage. By the time he made it out on to Diagon Alley, most of the fighting was over as the remaining Death Eaters were trying to find a way to escape but the scene would bring anybody nightmare for days at the least. There were hundreds of bodies lying around and many of them lying in awkward positions with broken limbs and blood flowing from their bodies. You couldn't take five steps without running into a body whether it was a Death Eater, goblin, or elf. The house elves showed up and started cleaning up the mess. The dead where gathered in their respective rows that ran the length of Diagon Alley. The dragon parts were gathered near the Leaky Cauldron's entrance to Diagon Alley. There was smoke coming from various businesses with every business either damaged beyond repair or so heavily damaged that it would take days with magic to repair. There was the smell of burning flesh as some died because they were burned to death and there were many body parts scattered about that nobody knew who it belonged to.

The injured were being marked with a glowing light around them so rescuers would not miss their bodies. They were either glowing red for critically wounded or blue for non-critical wounds. There was lots of moaning as all the medical staff available by the house elves, goblins, and London resistance were working hard to heal the wounded. The Death Eaters that were not critically wounded were taken prisoners. Their hands and legs were bound with anti-apparition ropes, their bodies checked for weapons and portkeys as they were stripped down to their undergarments. They were lined up in the middle of Diagon Alley in two rows, on their knees, and facing the Leaky Cauldron looking at the bodies of the mutilated dragons and a few of their dead brothers at arms.

While the recovery was going on, Harry was part of the team that was checking Death Eaters for weapons and portkeys. It was the most dangerous job left seeing as the fighting had ended. Harry's robes were covered with dirt and mud as he turned over bodies of injured and dead Death Eaters to check their bodies. With every passing body, Harry became more and more tired as he used more magic and physical abilities to aid the recovery effort. After a while, he was hoping that the fight at Hogwarts would hurry up so he can get the fight over with before he was too tired but at the same time he was hoping that the Death Eaters found out about what happened at Diagon Alley and cancel their attacks because he did not want to see a scene at Hogwarts like what he was seeing here.

Meanwhile, back at the Ministry of Magic, the fighting was well underway. All of the Aurors managed to make it to the Ministry before the fighting started. There were two lines of defense setup for the Ministry. The first would be the Aurors who would be at the Ministry and take the assault as it occurred while the Order would be in hiding and attack the Death Eaters from behind.

The attack started when a stream of explosion hexes flew at the Ministry of Magic from the air. The Death Eaters were all on brooms because they knew that the Ministry would expect a head on attack from the ground but not one from the air because nobody had ever attempted a pure air attack. This caught the Aurors by surprise and within minutes a third of the Aurors were either dead or too injured to

fight. A good part of the interior of the Ministry building was exposed due to all the hexes hitting it.

When the Aurors turned their defenses towards the sky, they started to feel what they thought was an earthquake but most disregarded it because they were too busy trying to shoot the Death Eaters down. It didn't take long for the Aurors to fall into chaos as word quickly spread that seven giants were making their way towards the Ministry. The giants were running straight at the heart of the Aurors defenses.

When the giants made it past the hiding Order members, the Order jumped out from behind them and concentrated all of their spells on one giant at a time starting with the last giant and making their way forward. Due to the vast size of the giants it took at least 20 spells that hit the giants at the same time in order to take one of them down. All of them were using the simple stupefy spell to stun the giants and hoping that they would stay stunned long enough so that portkeys that were strong enough could be made to send the giants back to their mountains where hopefully the other giants will take on the job of killing them.

The Aurors were depending on the Order to provide help with the Death Eaters but since the Order was tied up trying to handle the giants, more and more of the Aurors were falling to the killing curse. In their attack it seemed like the Death Eaters were only using two hexes. The first hex was the explosion hex which generated a red light while the other one was the killing curse which generated a green light. The explosion hex was favored in this attack because the Death Eaters were too far away to accurately aim a killing curse while maintaining the high altitude with their brooms. The Aurors needed the equivalent of the muggle sharp shooter to take down the Death Eaters.

Only a hand full of Aurors was left that had the ability to hit a target at that distance. The others deferred to using shielding charms to protect the sharp shooters. It took a while for the Aurors to come up with this strategy and when the Death Eaters discovered what the Aurors were doing, they descended to take the fighting head on. They knew that it was useless to stay in the air and hit magical shields but

what they feared most was returning to their master for an unsuccessful mission.

When the Death Eaters landed to fight the Aurors head on, they were fairly even when it came to how many witches and wizards were there to fight. The Order had to resort to continually stunning the giants because the giants were regaining consciousness faster than expected. When the Order managed to stun all the giants again, they left 30 of their numbers behind to guard the giants while the rest of them went to help the Aurors.

All of the Weasleys were there with the exception of Ron, Ginny, and Molly. The kids were forming a shield around their father but they were in the middle of the fighting. Bill and Charlie were actively fighting the Death Eaters while Fred and George were shielding the group from spells. Arthur was balancing between attacking and defending. He didn't like that his children were protecting him but knew that there was nothing that he could do to stop them from being here to help him. Nobody knew where Percy was but had a feeling he was somewhere in the Ministry building trying to fight against the Death Eaters.

When the Death Eaters saw the Order with Dumbledore leading the way, a few of them ran in fear of having to fight their former teacher or Headmaster. Dumbledore was angry and anybody who looked at him could see the fire burning behind the eyes that were no longer twinkling. Dumbledore was using a combination of magic from his wand and some wandlessly. Death Eaters were falling every where when word that Dumbledore showed up and he was angry.

The last major offensive was from a group of Death Eaters who were given command of the attack on the Ministry. Avery and MacNair charged at Mr. Weasley with a group of six Death Eaters and managed to make it to the Minister of Magic and his children. Bill, Charlie, and Mr. Weasley were fighting off two Death Eaters each while Fred and George had one a piece.

Avery was one of the men that were fighting Mr. Weasley. He was mad that his team was losing to the Ministry which fueled his anger

as he said, "Weasley, surrender the Ministry now and I'll spare your sons!"

Mr. Weasley was known to be a calm and collective person but when his family was threatened he can be just as protective as his wife, he roared back by yelling, "I promise you this Avery. If you harm my children I will kill you!"

Avery laughed and said, "What are you going to do Weasley? Especially after I kill your family one by one while you watch. Not to mention how much fun we'll have with your daughter."

Bill, Charlie, Fred, and George all heard what Avery just said and it only pushed them to fight harder. The four of them were slicing their wands horizontally which was followed by a burst of purple light. A few of the Death Eaters fell after giving off a sickening scream. They were on the ground clutching their sides where you could now see all the way down to the organs.

Avery looked sick for a moment but quickly recovered. He knew that he had lost the battle but hoped that he could at least kill the Minister of Magic so his punishment from Voldemort won't be as bad as a complete failure. Avery jumped away from Mr. Weasley and yelled "Avada Kedavra!"

Mr. Weasley's eyes widen in fear as he watched the green light shoot at him but at the last minute somebody jumped in front of him and took the killing curse for the Minister. After the shock of watching the killing curse speed towards their father, Fred, George, Bill, and Charlie shot stunning hexes at Avery who wasn't able to dodge them in time and fell. They turned back to see that their dad was cradling the head of the man that saved his life. It was Percy.

Dumbledore made it to Mr. Weasley shortly afterwards only to see Mr. Weasley cradling his son while the rest of the family present was trying to console their father with tears running down their faces. Dumbledore and the rest of the Order decided to back off to give the family time to grieve and form a perimeter around the Weasleys so they would be safe. About ten minutes after Avery fell in battle, the

Aurors managed to regain control over the area and the recovery process started for the Ministry of Magic.

Half an hour after the attack at the Ministry of Magic, the attack on Hogwarts started. The Death Eaters were not expecting much of a resistance considering it was now three o'clock in the morning so all the students should still be asleep and little if anybody were on patrols. They also knew that most of the staff left the castle to help defend the Ministry of Magic. The plans were to take the castle and prepare for a counter attack from the professors but they would arrive too late and come to a castle filled with the corpses of students.

The Patriots were divided into two forces. The group in the Sanctuary was led by Kayla and their job was to provide protection to the Sanctuary and medical aid when the fighting started. They were already swamped with the wounded coming in from the battle at Gringott's. The group hidden at the castle entryways was led by Ginny who was anxiously waiting for Harry to show up. The Centaurs were tracking the assembled Death Eaters the entire time and waited for their cue to attack.

Instead of the Death Eaters surprising the students, they were going to walk into a trap. The Death Eaters were going to be admitted onto the open grounds of the castle just beyond the Forbidden Forest. When the Death Eaters make it half way to the castle, they will be left in the open with no where to take cover. That is when the centaurs will be lined up just behind the tree line and fire their arrows at the Death Eaters from behind. When the Death Eaters turn around to engage the centaurs, the Patriots would hit the Death Eaters with stunning spells. The idea was to capture all of the Death Eaters possible.

What the Alliance didn't know was that all of the Death Eaters sent in the attack of Hogwarts were carrying portkeys with them due to what happened the last time they attacked the castle. This was done just in case not enough of the professors left the castle. Nobody knew when Harry and his team would arrive either so everybody had to be careful that Harry's team won't appear right in the middle of the fighting.

When the Death Eaters made their move, Harry received word and took a team of twenty strike elves with him. At the last minute, Harry decided to leave all of the goblins there so they could help in the recovery of Diagon Alley. Harry and the strike elves were lying on the ground while disillusioned by the lake and waited for the excitement to begin. He didn't want to spoil the first two attacks by the Alliance.

The Death Eaters arrived at the midpoint between the castle and the Forbidden Forest. The centaurs were lined up and shot their arrows hitting about a third of the Death Eaters anywhere from their thighs to their heads. Most of the Death Eaters were injured and couldn't run but a few died. After the volley of arrows, the Death Eaters turned around to engage the centaurs when they were hit from behind by a volley of stunning spells coming from the Patriots hidden along the castle where they had a view of Hogwarts grounds.

After more of the Death Eaters went down, the ones that didn't tried to revive their fallen friends. That was when Harry led a charge directly at the center of the Death Eaters. When Harry led his charge about half of the Death Eaters were either too injured to fight, stunned, or dead. Harry's volley of spells as he charged took down a few more but the Death Eaters quickly recovered and formed a perimeter around themselves. They were watching for attacks from the castle, the Forbidden Forest, and from Harry's group. Upon seeing Harry's charge most of them remembered that they were to take Harry as a prisoner for their master.

Harry was using a combination of the Reducto hex, Stupefy hex, and Leg Locker curse. The strike elves were not as kind as Harry after seeing so many of their friends die on Diagon Alley. The elves were sticking to the cutting hex only and using it at maximum strength which resulted in the decapitation and amputation of a few other limbs. What nobody knew was that Voldemort was nearby along with Bellatrix and Lucius.

The three were standing near Hagrid's cabin. Hagrid was returning from retrieving Grawp to help secure the castle while the teachers went to help at the Ministry when he caught sight of them. Hagrid had his crossbow at the ready and fired off a few arrows while Grawp went charging at Voldemort. Nobody realized that Hagrid was fighting

Voldemort until they heard Grawp's loud battle cry as he ran at the leader of the Death Eaters.

Hagrid was also running beside Grawp while firing his arrows but didn't get very far. Hagrid was hit by three killing curses at the same time when he shot his fifth arrow. Grawp froze for a moment as he watched Hagrid go down. Grawp tried to nudge Hagrid awake and kept crying out "Haggar! Haggar...!"

It didn't take long for Grawp to realize that Hagrid had died as rage built up inside of him. He turned his conviction for revenge on the three that killed his brother. Grawp was hit by killing curses continually but given his size it was going to take a few before it was going to kill him. Voldemort, Lestrange, and Malfoy were standing their ground when Grawp made it to them. Grawp gave one quick sweep of his hand along the ground to hit the three but missed. The three of them then shot three killing curses directly at Grawp's forehead which was just enough to kill the giant.

Grawp fell to the ground which caused a small earthquake. Voldemort and his group fell to the ground as Harry was rushing over to help Hagrid and Grawp. When Hagrid died, Harry froze for a moment then the fire behind his eyes flared as he realized that his first friend and the half giant that introduced him to the wizarding world just died in front of him while fighting against the man that was responsible for killing his parents, godfather, and friend. Harry's anger and mental control was lost once he saw Hagrid's only family get killed while trying to help Hagrid.

The magical energy was flowing off of Harry like water coming off of large waterfall. Everybody out there felt this including those as far away as the Patriots who haven't moved from their positions along the castle. Voldemort was the first to recover from feeling Harry's magical aura and quickly made his way to engage Harry. Harry was moving with ungodly speed as all fighting stopped to watch the duel between Harry and Voldemort.

Harry was continuing with his combination of attack spells with disregard to defense but he added a few of the more dangerous spells like the cutting hex. Voldemort didn't even bother to send any

attacking spells instead he relied on dodging the spells or magical shields until the two were closer. Harry was surprised that Voldemort was so agile given his age.

Voldemort cackled, “Potter, it doesn’t have to be like this. We can be allies.”

Harry hastily replied, “You already know my response to that question Tom. Besides I know something that I know you would kill for.”

Voldemort dodged another one of Harry’s spells then asked, “Go ahead... do tell.”

Harry said “The prophecy that you were so intent on getting last year. It was between the two of us...” he paused to let the information settle then continued on to say “Let’s just say that one of us is going to die and I’ll let you guess who.”

Voldemort didn’t bother to voice his answer and rationalized that it was going to be Harry because luck could only last for so long. Voldemort started firing the cruciatis at Harry which caught him a little off guard because this was the first time Voldemort retaliated. It was now Harry’s turn to run and doge the spells.

When he found a slight break in Voldemort’s offensive, Harry shot the cutting hex down to the grass which sent the blades of grass flying into the air. Harry then ran backwards as he started transfiguring the blades of grass into concrete walls. While doing this, Harry was using the X-Ray abilities of his glasses to see Voldemort’s progress through the walls. Voldemort was firing explosion hexes after explosion hexes and all of the bystanders could only see a cloud of dust surround Voldemort as he made his progress.

Harry stopped his transfiguration work and waited behind the last wall for Voldemort to blow it apart so he could start his counter attack. What nobody knew was that Voldemort eyes were enhanced along with his other senses during Voldemort’s countless rituals where he attempted to become immortal. This gave him the same span of vision as Harry had with his charmed eye glass. At the last wall,

Voldemort fired off two explosion hexes in a row while Harry fired a cutting hex immediately after Voldemort fired the first explosion hex.

It caught both of them by surprise and Harry took the explosion hex in his left abdomen while Voldemort took the cutting hex along his left chest, just barely missing the heart. The two of them fell to the ground and looked at each other with hatred and shock at being hit. As the two of them were slowly and painfully trying to stand to continue their duel, several bursts of light shot into the sky and illuminated the battle field.

The Order and Ministry were rushing towards Harry and Voldemort. Voldemort and all the conscious Death Eaters used their portkeys to escape. Ginny was rushing towards Harry when she saw him get hit with the explosion hex. Ginny looked around and saw the Order and Ministry coming and whispered to Harry, "Go to Potter Mansion..."

Harry was in so much pain that he couldn't make out what she was saying. Shortly after Harry lost consciousness. Ginny was holding back tears but was also relieved because she still felt his heart beating. The strike elves formed a perimeter around Harry as Ginny levitated his body to rushing him to the hospital wing. While rushing to the hospital wing, Nightlight landed on Harry and was dropping tears into his wound.

When they made it to the hospital wing, Harry was placed in the bed that was located in the far corner of the room. The curtains were closed around him as Dobby, Winky, Ray, and Rain started the familiar job of healing him. The strike elves along with Nightlight, Sunrise, Sunset, and Blaze stood guard around Harry's bed outside of the curtains so that nobody could disturb him. Ginny sat by Harry the entire time holding his right hand in hers and kept whispering that he better come back to her and that she was going to hex him for charging against the Death Eaters like he did while tears were flowing down her cheeks.

The Order and the Ministry were put out at not being able to get in to help Harry. Another duel threatened to break out between the strike elves and the Ministry but Dumbledore called for order and resolved

to just waiting for news of how Harry was doing while gathering the details of what was happening that night from other witnesses.

A/N: I know that many people did not like that I killed off Hagrid, Grawp, and possibly Percy but had to make this war a little believable after all, in a full scale attack somebody was going to die that was going to hurt Harry deeply. There is a reason to the madness. One reviewer got really close to what I was doing with the Alliance. I'm not modeling the Alliance after NATO but the United Nations. This will become clearer in the next chapter and you'll be able to see the correlation clearly. Many of you expressed dislike for the Order given what happened in the last chapter but keep in mind that it wasn't the entire Order and only the faction that was blindly devoted to Dumbledore and his inner circle that ordered the attack. The next chapter should clear up many questions.

Chapter 38

The Recovery

It took all night for the four house elves to stabilize Harry. The next morning, Ginny was woken by Remus and Tonks who were the only adults permitted to cross the defense lines of the strike elves. Ginny spent the night sleeping in a chair with her hand holding Harry's while resting her head over their clasped hands.

Remus softly said, "Ginny, your parents need to speak to you."

Ginny slowly made out that it was Remus and when she looked into his eyes, all she saw was sympathy and sorrow. Ginny turned to look at Harry as her mind debated on seeing her family or staying with Harry. In the end she decided to talk to her family for a moment and quickly return to Harry's side. She nodded and went with Tonks to see her family while Remus took the seat the Ginny just vacated and started whispering encouraging words to Harry in hopes that it would help his recovery.

Ginny was shocked at what she saw when she stepped out from behind the curtains. The entire hospital wing was filled with the wounded that were mostly Order members. Her family was huddled together and it was obvious that many of them had just finished crying and they were still dressed in the robes from the previous night. When she looked around again, it seemed like everybody were still wearing their burned and torn robes from the night before. Madame Pomfrey was still rushing around trying to help heal the patients with assistance from the Heads of Houses. Dumbledore was standing with the Weasleys while talking to Mr. Weasley about what she didn't know or could hear.

When Mrs. Weasley saw Ginny approach them, she rushed towards her and pulled Ginny into one of her famous motherly hugs that would suffocate a bear. After releasing Ginny she stood back to check her daughter for any injuries while exclaiming "How are you dear? How's Harry doing? Are you hurt?"

Ginny shook her head while tiredly saying "I'm fine and so is Harry. He was hurt pretty bad last night and it took all night to stabilize him... but he's fine now."

Upon seeing their mother rush off to Ginny, the rest of the Weasleys including Dumbledore slowly made their way over to the two witches. Ginny was running a mental checklist on checking her family for any injuries. After seeing everyone's somber state, she asked "What's wrong? Are you all fine?"

Mr. Weasley came forward and said "We're fine dear but there is something that I have to tell you." He motioned for his daughter to sit down and Ginny absentmindedly complied. He continued on to say "its Percy. He died last night saving my life."

Ginny ran through her mental checklist again and forgot about Percy. She checked to see if this was a joke and looked around the room to see if he was anywhere then looked at her family's eyes. A tear fell before she could hold it back and her dad took her in his arms and held her protectively and comfortingly. Mr. Weasley whispered the story of how Percy jumped out from no where to take the killing curse for him and more tears came from Ginny.

Ginny wasn't sure what to do. She wanted to be with her family but she also wanted to be with Harry when he wakes up. Mrs. Weasley noticed this and said "We'll wait here with you until Harry wakes up."

Ginny nodded her thanks as everybody started to exchange stories of what they saw last night or early morning. The house elves brought the Weasleys their breakfast in the hospital wing. The family stayed together and took shifts staying awake so they would know if something were to happen to Harry. About two days later, Harry woke up sore.

When Harry woke up, nobody was by his bed. Ginny was sleeping on the other side of the curtains with her family. His body had pretty much healed by this point and he was trying to get his limbs to move again. Harry's mind was racing with what he could remember prior to going unconscious but the one thing that stuck in his mind was all those that were lying dead on Diagon Alley along with Hagrid and

Grawp. He checked his watch and it was about seven in the morning, figuring that most of the leaders of the Alliance were already awake; he sent a message to meet him in the Hospital Wing.

After delivering his message, tears started to run down his face as the memory of Hagrid and Grawp getting hit with the killing curse continued to run through his head. His first friend died fighting the same evil wizard that took everything else away from him. Ronan, Alpha, and Houseman arrived about the same time accompanied by their entourage. They made their way quietly through the Hospital Wing to Harry's bed as everybody was still asleep.

Harry quickly wiped away his tears when he heard them coming and greeted each of them. The entourage waited outside the curtains with the strike elves that were standing guard. He was briefed on all the statistics from the three battles and the events that happened since then. In the end, hundreds of wizards and witches died along with a score of strike elves and goblins. The least affected were the centaurs and the Patriots who only had injuries with nothing too severe. The captured Death Eaters were still being held in the middle of Diagon Alley under the watch of the goblins as the strike elves took the watches every where along with Hogwarts.

The scene in Diagon Alley was volatile. The witches and wizards that came to Diagon Alley after the attack were surprised to see Death Eaters there when they first arrived but when more and more visitors showed up, a riot almost broke out. The civilians were continually conjuring objects to throw at the Death Eaters and the goblins ended up protecting the Death Eaters from the mob instead of keeping the Death Eaters from escaping.

Aurors showed up to take the prisoners but the goblins refused to hand them over saying that they were captured by the Alliance and since they attacked Gringott's which was a sovereign entity belonging to the goblins then the Alliance would prosecute them. Most witches and wizards knew that the goblins had little to any affection to most wizards and supported the idea that the goblins prosecute the Death Eaters because what ever the punishment was going to be; it was going to be harsh. Aurors and Alliance members were standing guard over the Death Eaters together until a solution could be determined.

The Wizengamot also convened over the last few days and after seeing the effects of the attacks, they passed legislation that allowed for the execution of confirmed Death Eaters by walking them through the veil or by public execution.

All of the injured goblins, centaurs, and elves were taken to the Sanctuary to recover. The dead were also taken there in preparation for two mass funerals, one for the goblins and one for the elves. The leaders also confronted Harry on the DA being sent by Dumbledore to attack him but Harry told them that that issue would be handled later as there were more important things to handle first. Harry also asked the Alliance members not to retaliate against Dumbledore, the Order of the Phoenix, and the DA. He was overruled on that issue but everyone agreed to address it at a later date.

Ginny woke up groggy trying to remember where she was. When her eyes managed to get the room in focus, she noticed a large group of strike elves, centaurs, and goblins guarding where Harry was lying. Two thoughts ran through her mind, either Harry had just woken up which she was hoping for, or Harry's condition worsened over the night. She jumped off the bed and rushed behind the curtains. Her move was so sudden that she woke up the rest of her family while she ran to Harry.

When she parted the curtain's everybody heard her yell "Harry James Potter, if..." They didn't get to hear the rest because she was passing through a privacy charm to deter eavesdropping. The rest of the Weasleys made to follow but were blocked by the guards.

Ginny parted the curtains and saw that he was sitting up and talking to the leaders of the Alliance. He appeared to be fine so she decided to give him a piece of her mind. She yelled "Harry James Potter, if you ever try to pull a stunt like what you did with Voldemort again then I will personally kill you for him." She pulled out her wand to make her point but when she did, Harry was instantly shielded by everybody between him and Ginny. They all had a look of contempt in their eyes and when she realized what they thought she was going to do, she lowered her wand and muttered "I'm not going to hurt him...yet."

After a few of the leaders backed away, the rest of the guards inside the curtains took that as their cue to step outside the curtains. Harry carefully replied "Gin, most of the Death Eaters were beaten already and it wouldn't have been that big of a deal if Voldemort hadn't shown up" he became somber and quietly continued on saying "and killed Hagrid and Grawp."

Harry was on the verge of tears again with Ginny who was trying to hold back tears also. She climbed into Harry's bed and the two of them held each other. The rest of the leaders decided to give them a moment to themselves and waited outside the curtains when they saw Ginny start her climb into Harry's bed. Ginny was sniffing when she relayed the story she heard about Percy while Harry whispered comforting words to her. The two stayed like that for what seemed like eternity, just holding each other and comforting one another as tears flowing from their eyes.

A few hours later, the two of them parted the curtains and slowly made their way to greet the rest of the world. Harry noticed that there were still a few DA members that were still recovering from the beating they took from the Patriots. The Weasleys rushed towards them as Harry instinctively pulled away from Mrs. Weasley who was the first to reach them and give them a hug. Mrs. Weasley was hurt when Harry tried to pull away and flinch at the sight of the Weasleys. She knew why Harry distrusted the family so much but she also knew that although her family's relationship with him started out deceptively, it grew into a more adoring/loving relationship.

Harry didn't say a word as he continued to try to pull away from the family. Ginny was also hurt at the sight of Harry pulling away because she hoped that the two sides would make up and hopefully one day things would return to the loving relationship that it once was before Christmas. She understood why Harry was acting the way he was though. Harry has been betrayed one too many times and from those that he trusted most. This was going to be a long recovery effort but she had a feeling that it will eventually happen and will probably happen quicker once Voldemort was out of the way.

Harry remained quiet outside of offering his condolences to the Weasleys. A general meeting of the Alliance was called for that

evening after dinner. There were three major issues that needed to be planned. The first was the funeral arrangements for their fallen friends and family. The second issue was how to handle the captured Death Eaters and possible responses to Voldemort. The last issue to be discussed was against Harry's wishes and that concerned the DA and the Order of the Phoenix's attack against Harry and the Patriots.

Outside of the voting members, everybody only knew of the first two items as the agenda for the meeting. It was a crowded affair as all groups showed up in their respective uniforms or formal clothing. Everybody that was eligible to arrive showed up. The only occupants of the Sanctuary that were not present were the orphans and the house elves that were keeping an eye on them. The administrators and staff of the orphanages were permitted to attend the meeting.

As everyone were talking and greeting one another in the large meeting room with the round table at the center and stadium style seating around the table which came to be known as the Assembly Room, Harry stood up and called for Order. Harry solemnly said "Will everybody please rise for a moment of silence in remembrance of our fallen friends and family." Everybody stood up and bowed their heads. After about a minute of silence, Harry confidently said "We have a long agenda tonight. Three major issues will be discussed and I open the floor for the first issue which is the funeral arrangements for our fallen friends."

Harry sat down as Alpha stood up and said "Houseman and I have already discussed the issue of the fallen elves and goblins." Alpha and Houseman nodded to one another to show their agreement as Alpha continued on saying "For the first time in history, we would like a joint ceremony for the elves and goblins. With the approval of the council, we ask for a joint burial by fire. We will extract blood from a few elves and goblins to mix as part of a monument that we would like to construct in the heart of the Sanctuary in the Rotunda on the first floor. We ask that the four leaders, Harry and Ronan participate in an ancient blood ritual with Houseman and me to honor the dead and form a protection bond for the Alliance."

Ronan replied almost immediately "I would be honored to participate in this bond."

Everybody turned to look at Harry when he stood. Harry said confidently "I am also honored that you all considered me for this ceremony and I accept."

Alpha nodded his thanks to Ronan and Harry, and then said, "This ceremony is a special bonding ceremony that will strengthen the connection and protection between the groups that we represent. Of the wizards, this will only protect the Patriots."

Dumbledore interrupted the group saying "May the Order of the Phoenix participate in this ceremony also?"

Mr. Weasley was also going to say something to the same effect but Alpha raised his hands to stop him when he replied to Dumbledore in a cold voice "We don't believe that it is a good idea for the Order and Ministry to be permitted in this ceremony. It is related to the third issue on today's agenda and you will understand why then."

Dumbledore and Mr. Weasley exchanged nervous glances at one another but remained quiet wondering what that third issue was that they were unaware of. Harry took the floor again and requested that the first issue be discussed in further details later on in private between the elves, goblins, and Patriots. All the voting members agreed unanimously to discuss the matter after the Order and Ministry members left.

After the vote, Harry said "Now to the second issue for discussion. What are we going to do about the captured Death Eaters and are we going to retaliate? If we do then what will we do?"

Ronan was the first to speak when he said "I believe that the wishes of the goblins and elves should be followed above all else for they suffered the most."

Harry nodded his agreement along with most of the parties there with the exception of the Ministry and the Order but the voting members really didn't care what they were going to say about it. Houseman stood up and said with conviction "The training that the advisors from the Patriots suggested with stealth kidnapping and tracking has been

going on in secrecy for a few weeks now. We believe joined with our intelligence network that we setup to spy on our enemies we would be able to capture all known and suspected Death Eaters that were to go into public area over the next few nights without raising any alarm considering most of them have gone into hiding for the time being.”

Alpha added “We can keep the currently captured Death Eaters where they are and leave them to suffer in the sun until we setup trials for them. I don’t think that we should start the trials yet until we capture the few that are still in hiding though I doubt that we would be able to get the three top Death Eaters and Voldemort any time soon because I believe they are in hiding together and probably will not show anytime soon until Voldemort fully recovers.”

Kayla stood up and asked “I get the feeling that you would like all captured Death Eaters executed instead of Azkaban.”

Alpha nodded when he said “I believe that after a fair trial that everyone found guilty of participating in the Diagon Alley attack or any other attacks that resulted in killing someone then they should be executed.”

This caused uproar from those objecting to and supporting the executions. The Order and the Ministry were against the executions but the elves and goblins were firm in their stance for the executions. The Centaurs were favoring the goblins and elves but the Patriots were fairly split on this issue. Since Harry was the president of the Alliance, he could not vote which left Ginny and Kayla to voice the opinions of the Patriots by their votes.

After a minute of loud arguing coming from all sides of the General Assembly, Harry called for order. Harry kept yelling and shot sparks out from his wand until order could be restored. After everybody took their seats again, Harry calmly said “Now that order has been restored, the discussion on the capture and execution of known and suspected Death Eaters are now open. If anybody here wishes to voice opinions please relay it to your respective representatives.” After a few messages were being passed back and forth from every group present, Harry said “The floor recognizes Houseman.”

Harry sat down as Houseman stood up. Houseman took a quick look around with all eyes on him waiting to hear his argument then with conviction he said, "I believe that the goblins agree with us on the issue of executing those that tried to kill us. Why send these Death Eaters to Azkaban when they will all end up escaping anyway and come back to kill more innocent witch, wizard, child, muggle, elf, goblin, centaur, or any other magical or non magical being. These Death Eaters are no better than a piece of shit because they do not value any lives other than their own arrogant selves. They have killed countless but the Ministry of Magic failed to keep them under control. The Ministry of Magic have had many opportunities to address the issue and fix the problems for years now but still fail to address these problems. There is no other choice than to eradicate the world of these hateful spiteful beings that know nothing more than pureblood supremacy while blindly following a fanatical leader that does not hesitate to torture, rape, and kill. We have a responsibility to do what is right no matter how much we hate it but our responsibility is to make sure that our children and their children will live in a safe and loving world. This is not possible as long as the pureblood supremacy mantra remains along with any fanatics that are no better than the equivalent of a muggle terrorist. The only solution to a fanatic that strives for chaos and anarchy is to eliminate them."

There were cheers from the goblins, elves, centaurs, and parts of the Patriots while the rest remained quiet. After, Houseman's speech, Harry stood back up to recognize Mr. Weasley to voice the opposition.

Mr. Weasley started apologetically but turned to conviction when he said, "I am truly sorry for all the elves and goblins that died on Diagon Alley a few days ago. They died defending themselves and killed those that threatened them. It is different now; we are not in the middle of a battle where our lives are immediately threatened. We are better than the Death Eaters. We live by a different set of rules and one of those rules are we can not kill those that are defenseless and pose no threat to us. All of the captured Death Eaters that are still on Diagon Alley are defenseless. It was not more than a day ago when the Alliance was protecting the Death Eaters from a mob that wanted them dead. It is our duty to carry out justice and a life time in Azkaban is what they deserve. It was true that Azkaban had major security issues in the past but we have fixed those problems. Aurors stand

guard now as the Dementors have left their post. Many other steps were taken to ensure that no other escapes are possible though I admit that nothing we do can guarantee 100 percent protection but 99.9 percent is a pretty good number for us to rely on. If we kill them than we turn into murders ourselves. We are doing nothing more than killing defenseless witches and wizards."

Alpha stood up before Harry could hand him the floor. Alpha angrily said, "Just remember that they are the scum that chase after defenseless women and children. They are the ones that attacked orphans. Do not ever compare us to Death Eaters again! I am not happy about having to kill anything but if that will ensure that the future becomes much safer than that is what I will do! Even the witches and wizards of Great Britain have voiced the same concerns. It is by their pressure that the Wizengamot passed legislation allowing for the execution of Death Eaters. Don't try to act all high and mighty because the Ministry and the Order are afraid to do what is necessary. We have a right to exact revenge on those that tried to kill us and have killed our friends and family. That is what will happen!"

Dumbledore replied, "What about those that did not participate in the attack? Are you going to kill them too because they associate themselves with Death Eaters? You can not execute every Death Eater just because they are one. You all would be judging all Death Eaters the same way the purebloods have judged all non-purebloods as inferior."

Ginny jumped up and yelled, "I don't give a damn about if Death Eaters should be given mercy or not! Who in here is going to go tell Anna and Anthony that they are orphans because mercy was given to the Death Eaters! Who in here is going to bring back Percy! Who's going to make sure that this never happens again? We all have to draw a line somewhere. Once you pass that line then you are no longer human and it is clear that no matter what line we draw the Death Eaters have crossed it!"

Arguing broke out between the two sides on this issue while Kayla and Harry were discussing with each other a few proposals shortly after Harry managed to calm Ginny down and comfort her a little.

Harry was heart broken at seeing Ginny so vulnerable and knew that something had to be done.

After agreeing with Kayla's proposal, Harry called for order again. When everything calmed down again, Harry said, "Kayla has a proposal that has my support." He motioned for Kayla to tell her proposal.

Kayla stood up and without a hint of fear she said, "I believe that no matter what, we will always remain split on the issue of death sentences for the Death Eaters. Therefore a compromise is in order; we start with the capture of all suspected and confirmed Death Eaters in hiding over the next few days. Every suspected and confirmed Death Eater will be given a fair trial under the truth serum with adequate counsel. Every Death Eater found guilty will appear before a Legilimens to search for three memories in particular. The first memory was the moment they agreed to become a Death Eater. The second memory was when they first killed someone because it is required to kill someone in order to become a Death Eater. The last memory was the worse crime that they committed. That way we would have double checked just in case the truth serum failed to do its job. If the Death Eater is a skilled Occlumens then they will face a master Legilimens like Harry to literally smash through their mental shields to extract the necessary information. If the Death Eater fails the second test then they will be sent through the veil if they participated in any killings of house elves, strike elves, or goblins. They will also be sent through the veil if they were found to participate in the attack on Gringott's which we know is every Death Eater lined up on Diagon Alley right now. All else will be given a life sentence in Azkaban but if they are an escape convict or if they manage to break out of Azkaban then they will be executed. I believe that this is the only proposal that will accommodate both sides of this argument. Nobody is going to like the entire plan but this is all we have. This is a modified proposal that we discussed earlier but this way we can move efficiently no matter if they are remorseful or not. In order to use the killing curse, you must truly want to kill that person. They may be sorry but it does not matter, they killed and will suffer the consequences."

After debating the issue a while longer, it was agreed by all the voting members that this was the best course of action. The proposal passed unanimously then it came to the third issue of discussion. Harry sighed then said, "The last issue on our agenda tonight is to address the aggressive nature of the Order of the Phoenix against Potter's Patriots one day prior to the Death Eaters' attacks on Gringott's, the Ministry of Magic, and Hogwarts." Harry took another deep breath and said, "Ronan, you have the floor."

Ronan said, "It is no secret to most here that a student organization known as Dumbledore's Army, under the command of Albus Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix, was sent to incapacitate Harry Potter, Ginny Weasley, and Kayla Rapp in an attempt to stop them from assisting the goblins and strike elves in the defense of Gringott's. Even though the centaurs did not play a role in the defense of Gringott's, we believe that is inexcusable what Dumbledore's Army and the Order of the Phoenix tried to do. Sanctions need to be placed on them!"

This came as a shock to many in the Ministry and Order delegation. They gasped as they heard Ronan speak and when he finished speaking; chaos broke out in those two sections. The Weasleys with the exception of Ron was in an uproar as they were demanding an explanation from Dumbledore. Dumbledore was afraid that his actions were going to come up before the Alliance but took a gamble that went against him. Almost every member in the Ministry delegation backed away from the Order in fear of being associated with a group that tried to attack the leader of the Alliance of Magic. Every member of the Order of the Phoenix that was not part of the planned attack voiced their displeasure with Dumbledore.

Harry let them argue with each other for some time, while the goblins, elves, centaurs, and Patriots watched as the Order fell apart. Dumbledore offered his same excuse of the greater good but nobody was listening to him now. Some of the more notable actions were the Weasleys with the exception of Ron quitting the Order and walking to sit by the Ministry representatives. In a few minutes, the Order lost about half of its members with many of them coming over to offer their apology to Ginny, Kayla, and Harry. The Weasleys were outraged that Ron would attack their only sister.

The centaurs, elves, and goblins wanted to include the Order on their short list of enemies which made many Order members nervous but after some negotiating and persuading from Ginny, Kayla, and Harry, it was decided that Dumbledore would no longer be allowed in the Sanctuary, the Order of the Phoenix lost their rights to the Sanctuary and were only permitted in by request from one of the leaders of the Alliance. All Order members were to have escorts with them everywhere they went inside of the Sanctuary should they be invited inside. A warning was also issued that if they tried to attack another member of the Alliance again then the Order would be placed on the list of enemies just under Voldemort with a freeze of all of their assets.

The warning was also extended to the Ministry delegation which they nervously acknowledged. As the meeting was letting out, the Weasleys came over to apologize to Harry, Ginny, and Kayla. Harry and Kayla only nodded that they heard the Weasleys then proceeded to go meet with Alpha, Ronan, and Houseman. Ginny gave her family a grateful smile than told them that it would take a while but things will get better between her family and Kayla and Harry. She then followed Harry and Kayla to go to their second meeting.

It was decided that the next day the bonding ceremony will take place shortly after the burial ceremony for the strike elves and goblins. A monument was also set for construction as all the plans were put into action that night through the next evening.

The next evening everyone except for the Order and Ministry were gathered along the tree line formed in a circle around the water well that serves as one of the entrances into the Sanctuary. There was a massive platform made of concrete that had a wooden house built over it. It was a simple wooden house with no glass where the windows were and designed as if a very poor family lived inside of it. Inside the house, it was one large open area with four beds stacked bunk beds lining the inside of the house. On every bed was either a strike elf or a goblin that looked like they were peacefully sleeping with the exception that there was a galleon on top of each closed eye. The burning in the house was a house elf tradition to represent death while performing their duties and the galleon was from the goblin tradition of paying for passage into the afterlife. They were all dressed

in white to represent purity and hope that they will go onto a good afterlife.

There was a long line as everybody took one walk through the house passing every dead strike elf and goblin. At the center of the house was an open area to drop flowers or any other mementos to be burned so that the fallen elves and goblin can take it with them on their next journey. It was absolutely quiet with the occasional sniffle from somebody as everybody walked through and remained in their lines as they reformed the circle of bodies outside the house.

Alpha and Houseman came up to the house and lit the four corners of the house on fire together. Everybody was entranced as they watch the house burn and the billowing of smoke come from the house. It took about two hours for the house and all its occupants to be reduced to ashes. When the flames died out, all of the ashes were gathered into three urns, one made of gold, one made of silver, and one made of bronze. While the ashes were being gathered, Harry went into the Sanctuary to prepare a place for the urns. The night before, Alpha and Houseman gave him the description of how they think the memorial should look like. Harry and Ronan agreed that it was a brilliant design and when it was complete it would hold lots of meaning to the Patriots, goblins, elves, and centaurs.

After the ashes were gathered, everybody took the well entrance to make their way into the rotunda where the final resting place of their fallen friends would be. Harry was just finishing up his conjuring and transfiguration work when everybody in the crowd got their first look at the new monument sitting in the rotunda. Everyone stared in amazement at the colored marble tribute that will honor the dead and bring hope to the future.

At the center of the monument was a large above ground casket made of white marble sitting on large four steps that formed a circular base to the monument. The four steps represented the four original members of the Alliance. The top of the casket lifts straight up into the air when opened. The main part of the casket itself was simple but the middle of the top had an indentation in it. There was a small bowl that sat in the indentation with different swirls of color floating around the base of the bowl like food coloring being added to water

as the water continued to move. Inside the bowl was a simple white candle that was charmed to burn for eternity to represent the single flicker of hope in the ever dark world. The right side of the casket had black marble engravings that said 'In honor of those that have given their lives so that there is a tomorrow.' The left side of the casket also had black marble engravings that said 'Magic is universal, not bound by wizard or muggle; goblin or elf; centaur or giant. Here stand those that vow to protect one another to honor the past, care for the present, and bring hope to the future.' This quote was in reference to the four life-size marble figures at the four corners of the casket. There was a centaur, a goblin, an elf, and a wizard with one figure at their respective corners. Their backs were to the casket and all standing at attention with the wizard holding his wand at waist level. It looked as if the four stone figures were protecting the casket and watching each other's back. Each figure also contained colored marble to represent their respective uniforms with the wizard dressed in the Patriots uniform. At the base of the casket there was a quote in black marble that was in all caps that said 'THE TOMB OF MAGIC.' At the head of the casket there were symbols of the four groups that composed the voting members of the Alliance. All of this was sitting on the four steps.

When everybody was gathered, the top of the casket was magically lifted up as the four urns were laid to rest inside the casket. The top rested back on the casket, the four leaders came up to the casket with one on each side preparing to start the ritual to unite the four groups. Each of the leaders knew their roles as they raised their right hand over the casket and used their left hand which was holding a small blade to create a small cut on their thumb so blood would drip onto the casket. All of them started to chant in their group's native tongue with Harry using Latin. The chanting was mystifying for all those watching then all of a sudden the candle over the tomb flared and the dripping blood stopped falling onto the casket but floated over to the candle and orbiting the candle. The blood of each individual collected in four respective groups near the candle. When enough blood was collected, the four respective groups of blood changed into a translucent colored symbol of those that they represented. The four symbols started to revolve around the candle as the candle lifted from the bowl that it was in and then gave off a large explosion of light that blinded everyone. When the light died down and everybody's vision

return, the candle was gone except for the flame that was there before. The four symbols had their own rotation pattern around the flame but what made it look even more beautiful was a glitter of light was showering down from the ceiling like a translucent glittery laser beam about the width of the bowl.

When they saw the glitter the four leaders stopped their chanting and stepped back. The ceremony was complete. Every member of the four groups now had the ability to speak in each other's native tongue. There was also a protection charm on each person that reduced the effect of hostile spells which was a result of the combining of the magic of the four leaders. The Sanctuary was also under a special protection charm that made it almost invulnerable when the four leaders are gathered at the Sanctuary. The last part was an everlasting healing charm was on the building. Anybody that enters the building will be slowly healed based on the healing abilities of the four groups of magic. It healed all minor wounds and helped to heal all serious wounds. The centaurs, elves, goblins, and Patriots were now brothers.

Two days later was the funeral for Percy which was set to take place in the morning and the funeral for Hagrid and Grawp in the evening. For the most part, ever since the bonding ceremony between the main Alliance members, those not close to the Weasleys, Hagrid, and didn't lose a loved one at the battle at the Ministry of Magic were joyful. Everyone else was comforting one another with Harry and Kayla doing their best to comfort Ginny. Ginny was a little withdrawn from everyone else except for Harry and Kayla.

The morning of the funeral, Harry woke to seeing Ginny lying next to him staring at him with a worried look in her eyes. Harry took her hand, pulled Ginny down so her head was resting on his chest and asked, "What are you thinking about, love?"

Ginny's head was going up and down with the rhythmic rise and drop in Harry's chest while she remained silent for a while. When Harry was about to ask her again, she said, "Percy's gone, Hagrid's gone, Grawp's gone, not to mention how many others in this school that have lost somebody over this past week. I guess... I'm starting to realize the heartache and the grief that you've been carrying around

with the loss of your parents and Sirius. Now you lose Hagrid. I know that you're not close to Percy or Grawp but I just wonder how it is that you are still going on and living your life. It is as if you're not afraid of anything anymore. I know that the bonding ceremony that we went through after Christmas gives me all the knowledge that you've been carrying in your head but your emotions are still a little confusing to me. How do you live? How do you find the strength to go on? How do you continue to fight day after day when there seems to be so much loss around you?"

Harry was thinking in silence for sometime and when he knew his answer he picked Ginny up and he placed her on his lap as the two of them sat in a chair in front of a mirror. He asked her, "What is it that you see?"

"I see you and me. I'm sitting on your lap with your arms around me," she said as if she were answering a question on a test.

Harry said, "You're right but you're also missing something very important. Not everything is as they seem at first glance. What I see is the lady I love the most in the world and the only one that has control of my heart. This beautiful lady, with all the hopes and dreams in the world, and one day I hope to be my wife, is sitting on the lap of the one man that dreams that along with his wife, they will have lots of children with red unruly hair and green eyes." He turned Ginny around on his lap and they were now staring into each other's eyes. He continued on to say, "I see myself as a dream when I'm around you. In the past, with the Dursleys, I dreamt that there was something better out there for me and that happened when I got to Hogwarts. At Hogwarts, I dreamt that I will be able to live a happy life and find someone to love and that person would love me in return for who I am and not some god. My first five years, I had Hermione and Ron to push me and we shared a mutual love for one another as friends and to some extent as siblings. In my third year, I found Sirius, who loved me like a son. At the end of my fifth year, I was shattered. Not sure of what to do and what to cling on to anymore and than you came into my life. You were always there but I didn't open up my eyes and lived blindly by those around me. I learned from my past experiences and decided to live for my own and to live for you. For a little while, the only thing that kept me going was Remus, Hermione, Ron, but most

importantly you. Our little talks at night time through the mirror always gave me hope that there was someone out there that was just for me and the inspiration to live and fight till my last breath. That was when your admirer showed up. That was when I knew I loved you. That was when I found my one and only soul mate. At Christmas, my dream fell apart as the web of lies around me started to unravel. I wasn't sure of what to do and held only one dream at that time which was to grow old with you and one day see our grandchildren run in the field happily and carefree. That is how I found the strength to stand up to Dumbledore and the Order when they tried to exert control again. That is how I found the strength to stand up to the Ministry and willingly stay in Azkaban instead of surrender. That is how I learned to live my new life by following my heart, always following the light, not to fall when my support structure disappears, and to stand up for those I love with an intensity and determination that says 'move out of my way or be destroyed.' At this point, I learned to love, learned to fight, and learned to cherish what I have because of you. You are everything to me and I would do anything to make sure that you are happy. It may take time in some cases but I will do whatever I have to, to make sure that you and I can live the dream that I have for the two of us. I live to fight because of my dream to be happy and old with you." Harry ended it with a quick soft kiss on the lips.

Ginny had drops of tears drop from her cheek as Harry spoke. He had never told her how it was that he managed his emotions and now she knew that it was all because he loved her more than anything. The two of them kissed for several more minutes after Harry's first kiss then Ginny whispered to him, "I dream the same dream with you."

The time came for the two of them to untangle themselves from each other and got ready for the funerals. Classes were called off for the week as many students were going to multiple funerals. The two of them dressed in formal black dress robes with their respective family crest on them. They met up with Kayla who was also dressed in black robes with her family crest on hers. The three of them met up with Ron and Hermione in Dumbledore's office preparing to go to the funeral. They were going to be escorted by Dumbledore, Remus, Tonks, and the rest of the Weasley family. Everyone took note that

Harry and Kayla tended to hover around Ginny and ignore everyone else in the room except for Remus and Tonks. At the designated time, the group took hold of portkeys and sent to a large cemetery.

At the funeral, there were many gathered with noticeable representation from members of the Order and Ministry. It was a simple cemetery with all the dead being buried underground with only marble or concrete grave stones that lied on the ground. The only thing that was taller than the grass was the flowers that were blooming around each grave site.

It was a short ceremony with every member of the Weasley clan stepping up and speaking about their late brother. Ginny's speech was heartfelt as she rushed from and to her seat between Harry's and Kayla's. There was not a single dry eye in the place and more crying could be heard as the casket was lowered into the ground.

After the ceremony, the group had lunch back at Hogwarts because the Weasleys and Order members were permitted to come to school because they were going to attend Hagrid and Grawp's funeral. After lunch, Ron and Hermione proceeded to show the rest of the Weasleys their rooms in Gryffindor Tower but wasn't able to show to much of anything that was personally tied to Harry like even where the trunk was located because everything Harry had was under several charms and enchantments to protect it from being tampered with.

While Ron and Hermione were giving their tour, Harry and Kayla accompanied Ginny to show her family her sleeping arrangements. Of course, this excluded the many nights where Ginny ended up crawling into Harry's bed in the middle of the night. Ron and Hermione wisely kept their mouths shut on this issue also because they didn't want people to know about Hermione and Ron also sleeping in the same bed at night time. It seemed like with all the games of bed hopping, the only person who remained in her own bed was Kayla.

Kayla was getting closer to a boy from her old school. After Christmas, the two of them have been writing to each other non-stop. They also had taken the mirror talking idea from Harry and Ginny so Kayla

spent much of her time talking to her new boyfriend and her friends from home which helped her from being home sick.

That evening, Hagrid's funeral took place outside of the well. The Alliance gave permission because everyone knew of Hagrid's kind heart and the desire for the two of them to be buried next to each other. Hagrid and Grawp were buried in two separate caskets that were laid under the cement foundation that was used to build the house that was burned with the strike elves and goblins inside of it. A life size statue of Hagrid and Grawp was constructed standing on the cement foundation. The two of them were kneeling down with their hands open as a welcoming gesture. It was decided that this would be used as a communal area for forest creatures where they could eat and drink in peace. The food and water were to be provided by the Alliance and the healing protection was extended to the clearing area around the well so animals could be healed just like how Hagrid used to care for the animals.

It was an emotional ceremony with emphasis for Dumbledore and Harry. The two of them were considered the closest to Hagrid. After the ceremony was over, the groups went their separate ways while Harry, Ronan, Alpha, and Houseman, secretly casted some protective charms over the well to allow only approved people to enter through the well similar to a Fidelius charm but without being hidden from sight.

A/N: The Tomb of Magic was my variation of The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The story is almost over folks as I will be leaving soon on vacation so I will do my best to finish the story before I leave.

Chapter 39

The Third Task

For weeks after the funerals, hundreds of Death Eaters were captured and a two court system was setup. One was run by the Ministry of Magic for Death Eaters in general and the second was run by the Alliance headed by the goblins to put on trial all those that have wronged the goblins. The Alliance was not permitted to try those that wronged the centaurs and house elves because they weren't recognized as sovereign entities.

The Ministry of Magic used its normal system of trial to be heard by the Wizengamot and an appeals process that was either granted or denied by the Minister of Magic. In most case, the appeals were denied due to the overwhelming evidence and almost all of those appearing before the Ministry of Magic court were sentenced to life in prison. The only ones that weren't sent to life in prison were newly recruited Death Eaters that have not killed yet or those that the Ministry felt were remorseful and did not return to Voldemort when summoned.

The court system set up by the Alliance was harsh but took longer. All of the Death Eaters captured on Diagon Alley and a few who escaped the battle were sentenced to death after a fair trial where they were provided with adequate counsel or the defendants provided their own counsel. They were all found guilty even when the lawyers tried to do tricks in the court room like shifting blame and pleading that they were under the Imperius curse. The reason why the Alliance court system took longer was because all of the guilty were automatically granted one appeal to have their cases heard again. This only worked to prolong each Death Eater's case but the Alliance felt it was necessary to make sure that justice was served.

The Alliance asked for permission to send the Death Eaters through the veil but the Ministry denied the request stating that since the goblins are a separate entity then they must carry out their own death sentences because the Ministry of Magic did not want to get tied up in it. This angered the voting members of the Alliance which caused more resentment towards the Ministry and Order delegations. The Ministry was adamant not to execute anyone even though public

opinion was at an all time high for executing Death Eaters. Mr. Weasley along with Dumbledore, weren't exactly friends anymore but continued to work from the same agenda, and persuaded enough members of the Wizengamot not to use the death sentence. The Alliance ended up using public hangings or given the death potion as witches and wizards continued to throw conjured items at the Death Eaters.

As expected, a few of the top ranking Death Eaters along with Voldemort weren't captured. Bellatrix, Lucious, Pettigrew, and Voldemort were hiding out together planning their next move. The remaining Death Eaters agreed that something drastic must happen and a critical blow must be dealt to Harry to take him out of the equation. It became painfully obvious to everyone on both sides of the war that the key figure in this war was Harry and if Harry survived the light would win and if Harry were to die then more than likely the light would lose.

Weeks after the trials, life at Hogwarts returned back to normal, at least normal by Hogwarts standards. The DA resumed its practice session under Ron and Hermione's leadership but many of the members quit in fear of retaliation from the Patriots. Ron and Hermione were still dating but one major issue kept their relationship from progressing which was Harry. Hermione became remorseful after their attempted ambush on Harry and she was hesitant to carry through with those orders in the first place. She tried to talk the Order out of issuing those commands but they wouldn't listen to her. Instead, she managed to convince the DA to only use stunning spells when trying to capture Harry. She hoped that he wouldn't be hit with too many spells and survive the ordeal without any injuries.

Ron was still acting like an ass while still blinded with jealousy for Harry. The fact that Harry became the leader of a powerful alliance that is composed of some of the most influential people in the magical world, became incredibly rich while not having to work for it, in a stable and loving relationship, and his natural talents in magic made Ron more resentful. The one thing that Ron did acknowledge was that Harry did not have an easy life because he saw it with his own eyes when he went to rescue Harry from the Dursleys during his second year with help from Fred and George. Hermione was making

some progress with Ron as Ron slowly began to see what really was going on but just like Percy, Ron is just too stubborn to admit that he was wrong.

In all of her debates with Ron, Hermione became more lost than ever before. Hermione always relied on Dumbledore being right and not leading her astray but that didn't seem to be happening. The more she learned about what was going on and especially the fallout between her favorite Professor, which was McGonagall, and the Headmaster, she had to question on more than one occasion if she was doing the right thing. When everything came to light at the last Alliance meeting that the Order was permitted to attend, she saw the errors in her way and was trying to slowly work her way back into Harry's life as a friend and hopefully as one of his best friends once again.

Hermione became closer with Ginny and Kayla as the weeks passed by. Ginny and Kayla sympathized with Hermione and knew that she was only doing what she thought was right. They hoped that Harry would forgive her and accept her back in his life but knew that that was going to be a long healing process. Ginny and Kayla were resentful towards Hermione at first and tried to avoid her whenever possible but Hermione managed to confront them and plead her case. They weren't sure if she was putting on an act or not so they played it cautiously and observed what Hermione was doing and what she wasn't doing. After about a month, the three girls weren't quite friends but their relationship was healing. Kayla had a hard time convincing Ginny and knew that she was going to have one hell of a time trying to convince Harry.

Between Dumbledore and Harry, it would take an act of God to heal their relationship. Harry always held out hope that he would be able to work with Dumbledore again but that all went to hell when Dumbledore ordered the attack on him. Dumbledore tried at first to talk to Harry and make him see his side of the story but Harry just stared at the Headmaster and didn't reply with anything other than 'yes' and 'no'. Dumbledore ended up giving up on trying to heal their relationship and tried to devise plans to help Harry in his cause instead of control Harry after the berating that he took from the members of the Alliance, this did not include his minority group of

supporters which was now a small group of individuals inside the Order. For the most part, the Order was no where near the strength they were prior to the meeting in the Sanctuary with most of the members quitting and offering their services to Harry. Harry had them assist the Aurors and help organize the town defense groups though it is no longer necessary considering all the Death Eaters that were captured. Needless to say, Dumbledore lost credibility within the Alliance, many members of the staff at Hogwarts, most of the former members of the Order of the Phoenix, and a few influential officials in the Wizengamot. Dumbledore still held power and for the most part, most of the wizards and witches in the world still revered him as a great wizard.

During the weeks of relative peace, due to the information from the network of house elf spies, the Patriots reduced the amount of practice sessions. They only had once a week practice sessions while the rest of the time was given to the Patriots to freely wander into the Sanctuary for meals, exploring, playing with the orphans, or shopping. The house elves in the Sanctuary happily agreed to help the students get their miscellaneous shopping done because the elves were eager for more things to do.

The orphans were transported back to their respective orphanages but social events were setup so that the kids could meet each other once a week because many of them became friends when they lived together in the Sanctuary. Most of the excursions were set for the orphans to go to Hogsmeade and walk around town under escort from chaperones and Aurors or they went to the Sanctuary to play with the Patriots and house elves that they came to see as friends. Anna and Anthony got to spend a lot of time together when Anna went to the Sanctuary. The orphans voiced their desire to make some money so they could buy things on their excursions so an arts and craft shop was setup so the kids could make things and sell it to merchants or sell from their orphanage. Harry ended up buying a great deal of the kids' art and used it to decorate the Sanctuary with emphasis in the bedrooms. The art started to gain more attention as word got out that Harry liked it and the kids now had enough money to share with each other. They were not rich but now had enough money to buy a birthday gift for each other once in a while and buy food and drinks in town when on excursions.

The Hogwarts All-Star team was picking up on their training sessions. Hermione, Ron, Luna, Ginny, and Kayla were slated to represent Hogwarts. Harry had little fear that Ginny and Kayla were going to lose their matches, he doubt that they would even be injured but he knew that he was biased and hopeful in this situation. Ginny and Kayla's abilities were beyond NEWT level with Hermione, Ron, and Luna just below NEWT level. The team in general was well above average but Durmstrang did not have the difficulties with Defense teachers that Hogwarts had in the past.

The much anticipated day of the last challenge arrived: Durmstrang versus Hogwarts in individual dueling competition. The students at Hogwarts were excited because the thought that their team composed of leaders of the Patriots and the DA losing was unthinkable. On the other hand, Durmstrang was determined to take this into a tie breaking competition and hopefully they will get lucky in the draw. As usual, Beauxbaton showed up with Madame Maxime serving as the official for the duels. The Great Hall was set up in a football style stadium seating with seats running the perimeter of the oval. At the center of the oval was an elevated platform made of wood sitting about four feet above the ground that was also oval. There was about a ten foot gap between the dueling platform and the stands.

On the North and South side of the stadium, which was the side with the Head Table and the large doors leading into the Great Hall, were small spectator boxes at ground level on the stands. That was where the two respective teams were seated. The dueling platform was surrounded by a clear protective dome to stop outsiders from interfering in the match and to protect the spectators from stray spells. Entry onto the platform was through a side door that was connected to the team observation areas. Once the two duelists were inside the dome and the doors closed, the dome would seal the occupants in until one side was defeated.

Reporters from around the world were also present to witness and record what was going on. To most of the world, at this point, the threat of Voldemort is gone unless there was something happening that nobody knew about. There was relative peace and the people

were starting to live their lives without fear, though some did heed Harry's advice and to remain vigilant until Voldemort and his top ranking leaders were removed. The dueling in this competition would be everything goes just short of the unforgivables as the only protocol is bowing before the start of the duel and the duel ends when the other person can no longer duel.

Ginny was the first on the Hogwarts side of the duel. She was going against a tall, blond, beautiful girl that sent waves of confidence off of her as she walked. The two girls bowed to each other and almost immediately the fighting started. Ginny shot smoke from her wand and when the arena was covered in smoke, she disillusioned herself and slowly made her way behind her opponent or at least where she hoped that her opponent would be. The girl from Durmstrang shot various stunning spells in front of her in every direction as she slowly backed towards the edge of the dueling area so that Ginny couldn't get behind her. At first the smoke was so thick that nothing could be seen but as it slowly dissipated, Ginny managed to see where the spells were originating from. Ginny ended up standing next to the girl while the girl from Durmstrang looked around frantically for any sign of Ginny. When she realized what was happening it was too late, Ginny removed the disillusionment charm on herself and had her wand pointed at the girl's head. Ginny asked if she conceded which she reluctantly agreed to do and dropped her wand. Ginny won the first match as the Hogwarts students cheered enthusiastically for her. The two girls shook hands afterwards and congratulated each other before they made their way back to their seats.

Luna was next going against a tall muscular guy from Durmstrang. Just like Ginny's duel, immediately after bowing to each other, they started firing spells at each other. Luna was using offensive spells only but the guy was faster than her. He started off with shielding charms but when he recognized the pattern in Luna's spells which were a mixture of the tickling charm and simple stunning spells while her spells were also aimed at his chest. After standing in one spot and allowing Luna to get comfortable in her pattern of spells and the targeted spot on his body, he rolled to his right and fired off a stream of silencing charms around Luna and where she was standing just in case she was going to jump out of the way. Luna was hit by the silencing charm and unable to fire off another spell because she

never learned how to do wordless magic. The guy jumped backwards as Luna tried to rush him and fired the disarming spell at her which hit her in her chest. Durmstrang won the second duel and after the announcement, the guy removed the effects of the spells that he placed on Luna just before they walked back to their respective teams.

Kayla was up next going against another guy that appeared to be in good physical shape. Kayla was quicker than her opponent and shot a constant stream of water out of her wand but it was more like fast bursts of water coming from a cannon. She kept the stream of water going and redirected to wherever her opponent moved. The guy at first spent most of his time dodging the water and using shielding charms once in a while to give him time to catch a quick breath. What he didn't seem to realize or didn't show that he realized was that the water was building up on the platform because of the protective barrier that kept stray spells from leaving the dueling arena. About five minutes into the duel, the water was already up to their knees. Kayla was starting to get tired from using the water spell so much and felt her magical reserves getting weaker. She casted a bubble around her body which encased the lower half of her body from touching the water similar to how a bubble head charm works but at the lower part of the body. While this was going on, her opponent was panting from running around so much and fired a few poorly aimed spells at Kayla which she didn't know what they were because he was whispering his spells. When the bubble charm was completed and her body was protected from the water, Kayla shot mild electric shock spells into the water. She learned the electric shock spell from her healing class which was used to help restart the heart should the heart stop beating. At first the shock spell only tickled her opponent then it became painful as she slowly increased the magic behind the electricity. It didn't take long for her opponent to surrender, he didn't know how to do the bubble shield to protect himself and was too tired and too hard to wade through the water to make it to Kayla to physically stop her so he just dropped his wand and raised his hand to surrender. After congratulating each other, when the door to the dueling platform was opened to allow Kayla and her opponent to leave, the water rushed out and soaked everyone who was sitting on the lower levels. After some drying charms on people's clothing and on the dueling area, the next duel was ready to start.

The next duel was between Ron and Petia. After the bowed to each other, Petia dropped to the ground holding her ankle and acting like she was in a lot of pain. Ron lowered his wand and slowly made his way over to her to see if she was fine and was about to call the duel off when Petia raised her wand and shot a stunning spell at Ron. Ron was quick enough to respond with a shield charm due to all the quidditch practices. A small portion of the spell made it through but only managed to slow down Ron for a short period of time. Petia jumped back up and started hurling all kinds of spells from conjuring spells like avis and serpensortia which conjured birds and snakes respectively to cause confusion while cutting and stunning hexes like diffindo and stupefy quickly followed behind the conjuring spells. To Ron's credit, he was able to discern the distraction spells from the harmful ones. The problem was as the spells became more complicated and with so many birds and snakes running around, he lost concentration long enough to have his wand hand hit with a cutting hex which slowed him down just enough for a stunning spell to hit him almost immediately afterwards. The score was now tied two to two with Hermione's duel as the deciding factor.

Hermione went up against a 7th year guy that exuded confidence and just looking at him made you feel a little intimidated. While watching the other duels, she noted how each person dueled and how they won. She also tried to make note if there was a pattern to how Durmstrang dueled which she noticed that with the exception of Petia, they tend to fight straight on and fought poorly if their game plan needed to be changed in the middle of the fight, so she needed to be on the offensive early. After their bow, both of them shot banishing charms at each other at the same time and neither of them reacted quickly enough and threw their opponent into the protective shielding around the dueling platform. They slowly stood back up and stumbled towards each other but Hermione's opponent started using Kayla's trick and started firing off bursts of water. Hermione formed the bubble charm on the lower half of her body and fired off 'lumos maxima' with her eyes closed which temporarily blinded everybody in the Great Hall. While everyone but Hermione was blinded, her opponent continued to fire a stream of stunning spells at her and amazingly enough it was close to where she was standing and moving around. Hermione quickly realized that this was probably

because he could hear the bubble around her body moving around in the water while she was trying to dodge the spells. She decided to copy a trick by Petia and dropped to the ground acting like she was stunned with her eyes slightly opened but not noticeable to someone looking at her while her hand gripped her wand. When everybody regained their vision, they saw Hermione lying on the ground. The guy from Durmstrang started jumping up and down in excitement as the students from Durmstrang screamed in excitement at winning but Hermione jumped up and quickly stunned him. The students from Durmstrang stared in disbelief at losing while the Hogwarts students were still processing three things which were Hermione winning her duel, Hogwarts won the dueling tournament, and Hogwarts won the tournament of challenges from Durmstrang. After a minute of silence, the students from Hogwarts and those who supported Hogwarts from Beauxbaton jumped up and down in excitement while Durmstrang and their supporters stared in disbelief.

After the duel, everybody was escorted out of the Great Hall so it could be prepared for a celebration for Hogwarts and end to the challenge from Durmstrang. When everybody returned, they found that most of the tables in the Great Hall were circular tables that seated anywhere from six to ten people each. The dueling platform was left there and there was an open invitation for all those interested, they could have friendly duels while the celebration was going on. The leaders of the three schools did the planning for the celebration.

While the celebration was going on, many of the students from the different schools were sitting with each other and talking happily. Though, Durmstrang was a little depressed about the loss, they acknowledge that it was a fair duel and that Hogwarts was an excellent school.

Ginny and Kayla approached Harry during the celebration and asked him to join them out by the lake under their favorite tree. When they reached the tree, Hermione was there along with Neville and Luna. Harry was about to walk back to the castle but one look from Ginny and Kayla and he knew that this was important. Harry was so preoccupied by trying to figure out what Hermione, Neville, and Luna wanted that he didn't notice a small crowd that was following him.

When Ginny, Kayla, and Harry met up with Hermione, Luna, and Neville, Hermione was the first to speak. She walked up to Harry while facing the ground sheepishly and slowly raised her head while she apologized. She said, "I'm sorry Harry for everything that has been going on this year and I guess to some extent for a very long time. I never meant to hurt you or should I say, we never meant to hurt you." She gestured to Luna and Neville.

"We thought at first what we were doing was the right thing. It wasn't until recently that we realized what we were doing was wrong. I guess deep down, we knew what we were doing was wrong but just couldn't admit it to ourselves," Neville had continued off where Hermione had left off.

In an even voice, Harry asked, "Why...Why did you do it?"

Luna joined in and losing her usual airy demeanor, sheepishly replied, "I think in a way we fell to temptation. We knew it was wrong in some sense but we were used due to our weaknesses. Hermione has always trusted Dumbledore with everything given everything that she has read about him. She didn't want to believe that Dumbledore was manipulating you and that she was also being manipulated because Dumbledore was supposed to be a hero of the light. In some sense the same thing was happening with Neville. You already know about Neville's parents and how they were tortured. Dumbledore told Neville that if Neville agreed to help him then he would do everything in his power to help Neville's parents. I guess any of us would do that if we were given hope that our parents could be healed or saved. Well for me, I've always been an outcast and for the longest time, only Dumbledore accepted me, then Ginny and then last year you all accepted me. But I guess it took some time for me to come to terms that Dumbledore was wrong and you didn't need me to help you. In a way, I thought I was helping both sides but I guess I was just hurting you. We're really sorry and we want to make it up to you. We'll do anything to get you to forgive us."

"How do I know that you all aren't trying to set me up again?" Harry's scathing reply hurt Hermione, Luna, and Neville. Hermione and Luna were close to tears.

Nobody responded because they were too ashamed and while everybody was quiet. Harry took this opportunity to do a little bit of probing in their minds. Due to Harry's mastery of Legilimency, when Harry is in close proximity with someone, he is able to use Legilimency without having to look in a person's eyes. Dumbledore could barely perform this and Voldemort could only do it to Harry due to the link that Voldemort and Harry shared. Harry saw that they were truly remorseful but a side of him knew that he wouldn't be able to trust the three of them like he used to be able to. What hurt him was that Ron was not included in this group but relieved somewhat that his friends didn't abandon him over something that was frivolous but something that all of them were blinded by. He could relate to them considering, like Hermione, how much blind faith he had placed in Dumbledore in the past and it wasn't until absolute proof was given in the letter and memories from Kayla's mother that Harry became enraged with Dumbledore instead of the displeasure that he had prior to that moment. He also knew what it felt like to be rejected by everyone around him like Luna. He knew the feeling of trying to be accepted but to continually be rejected because nobody took the time to get to know him. Just like Neville, Harry would do anything if he could bring his parents back or if he was in Neville's case, bring them back from insanity.

Harry turned to look at Kayla and Ginny who had hopeful looks in their eyes that Harry was going to forgive the three estranged friends. Harry was confused; he wasn't sure what to do. If he forgave them then it would be too easy but on the other hand, a true friend wouldn't make another friend suffer. Many arguments continued along that line in Harry's mind about what to do and what to feel. After about what seemed like an endless amount of time of absolute silence, Ginny placed her hands in his and gave him a hopeful look and asked, "Harry?"

Harry gave her a kiss on her forehead and gave her hand a squeeze. He turned to look at the lake as if expecting his answer to appear on the lake's surface but none came. Hermione and Luna were sniffling as they were wiping their nose absentmindedly on their respective sleeves while staring at Harry's feet. He ended up doing more mental probing to determine everything that Hermione, Neville, and Luna have been doing with relation to him and saw a few things. The first

thing he saw was how everything started off small and snowballed into the mess that they were in now. He also saw the pain that went through each of them as Dumbledore asked them to be more persistent with Harry. The last thing he saw was what was happening currently. Harry saw that the longer he was not saying anything, the more that the three of them were losing hope and the more their hearts were breaking and in some cases, it was shattering.

Harry took Ginny's hand again as Kayla took his other hand while she asked, "What are we going to do now?"

Harry took a look at everyone again then sighed. "To tell you all the truth, I don't know what to do either." He looked over at Hermione, Neville, and Luna, and said, "I'm sorry but I've spent the last few minutes probing each of your minds to determine if I should even be talking to you or not but that developed into if you all were remorseful and truly wanted to change." Harry waited to let the information sink into them and then continued on, "This year has been pretty hard on me also but one of the things that was the hardest has always been the feeling that I was betrayed by my closest friends or former friends."

Hermione's group flinched when Harry said former friends. Hermione was about to say something but Harry held up his hand to silence her and continued on to say, "I always hoped that one day we would be friends again but that feeling grew dimmer and dimmer with every passing day. We will probably never achieve the close friendship that we had in the past but I'm willing to work on it if you all are. I can't say that I can forgive you all for what you all did because I'm not sure of how to do that but I can say that I would have helped you all out even if we were still fighting with each other. I do hope to be friends again but the road to recovery will be a long one."

Ginny gave him a bone crushing hug that would have made Mrs. Weasley proud. She gave him a long kiss and when he recovered from the kiss, he found that he was being hugged by everyone. The group of six sat under the tree for the next few hours getting reacquainted with one another though it felt awkward for all of them but they all knew that this was the first step to recovery and that they were willing to try.

When it was getting dark, Hermione suggested that they all go to dinner and everyone agreed. The group made to go to the Great Hall but was met by Headmaster Lechkov of Durmstrang and three of his staff members. He asked if he could have a word with Harry and Harry agreed while motioning for his friends to go on ahead and he'll meet them in the Great Hall.

The group from Durmstrang and Harry watched his friends walk off and Harry turned to Lechkov and asked, "What can I do for you sir?"

Lechkov replied, "If you will take a walk with me, I would like to ask you about your dueling abilities."

The group walked off towards the Forbidden Forest and when they almost made it to the forest when Harry noticed that one of the staff member's hairs started to change into a platinum blonde color. Harry stopped and pulled out his holly wand and pointed it at the man whose hair just changed color. Harry yelled, "Stupefy!" and the spell hit its mark and the man fell over.

The rest of the staff from Durmstrang pulled out their wands and pointed it at Harry. Lechkov's facial and body features slowly started to change while the group had their wands on Harry. When the change was complete, Harry saw that it wasn't the Durmstrang staff that was with him but Voldemort, who was Lechkov, accompanied by Bellatrix, Pettigrew, and Malfoy Sr. was the man that Harry stunned.

Harry yelled, "What did you do to Headmaster Lechkov and his staff?" While Harry was yelling, he sent an emergency message through his watch to every member of the Alliance that had a watch and to the Patriots. He knew that he wouldn't be able to take on all of them because Voldemort would take up all of his attention in a fight.

Voldemort cackled his response, "Potter, you catch on quickly but Lechkov is none of your concern. He's taking a nap in a closet with the rest of his teachers."

"Why did you have to kill them?"

"Itty bitty baby Potter is so concerned with others. Awe, how heroic... Don't worry, they're not dead, we kept them alive just in case we needed more of their hair but they'll be dead soon enough, right after the Dark Lord dispose of you," Bellatrix responded in a taunting voice. While Bellatrix was taunting Harry, Pettigrew was reviving Malfoy.

Harry slowly backed away as all the Death Eaters gathered around their master. Voldemort laughed and triumphantly said, "Where are you going to run to now Potter? You're out here all by yourself and nobody is here to help you."

What Voldemort and his Death Eaters did not notice was that the centaurs, goblins, and strike elves were gathering along the tree line taking aim at each of the Death Eaters. When Voldemort saw Harry's eyes twitch just a second looking away from him and towards the tree line, Voldemort casted a powerful shield around him and his Death Eaters. When that happened, Harry also casted a powerful shield charm around himself because he was afraid that Voldemort was attacking him. The centaurs launched a barrage of arrows that bounced off of Voldemort's shield. The same thing happened when the strike elves magic rebounding off of Voldemort's shield when they tried to attack but the goblins were casting anti-portkey charms over the open field extending from the Forbidden Forest to the front gates of Hogwarts.

Bellatrix, Malfoy, and Pettigrew sent the explosion hex at Harry. They knew better than to cast the killing curse because they knew that only Voldemort could kill Harry. That didn't stop them from weakening Harry as much as possible and letting their master have the final blow. Harry's shield managed to withstand the full brunt of Malfoy and Pettigrew's spell but only reduced the effect of Bellatrix's curse. Bellatrix's curse was weakened enough so that the effect on Harry was skin and some muscle being blown away from Harry's upper left arm. He stumbled back but recovered quickly.

The Patriots being led by Ginny and Kayla were leading the charge into the fight. They were followed by the Hogwarts staff and members of the Order that were at the castle for the post-tournament celebration. All of them had their wands drawn and ready to help

Harry. There were just too many people out there and Voldemort had no way to escape.

Remus made to charge directly at Pettigrew with Tonks following him. Remus, Tonks, and the centaurs all ganged up on Pettigrew who didn't have a prayer in the world. As soon as Voldemort's shield dropped, Voldemort used Pettigrew as a human shield which resulted in his body being pierced with dozens of arrows and Remus beating every single drop of blood out of Pettigrew's body. When Tonks made it to them, she was trying to pull Remus off of Peter's dead body. She was finally successful in dragging away Remus when the centaurs came up to help her. She held him as he sobbed from the pain of the memories of his dead friends, joy for being able to get his revenge, and remorse from being barbaric and uncontrolled when he was beating on Pettigrew. Tonks held him close and whispered comforting words to him.

Neville followed by Luna ran for Bellatrix. When Bellatrix saw Neville coming, the memories of torturing the Longbottoms came back to her and she became determined to put the last Longbottom into a comatose state so that the family would vegetables together. She ran to Neville and the three started to duel. Bellatrix was sending an endless barrage of red spells and the only word coming out from her mouth was 'Crucio.' She looked like a possessed woman as she smiled while trying to torture Neville. She wasn't successful though because Luna was doing an endless stream of transfiguration work that formed a physical barrier that took the brunt of the curses. Neville would run around the barriers but mentally he was thankful that Luna was there to protect him. When Neville made it close enough that his aim would be accurate and his spells strong enough to have an effect, he let out a stream of cutting hex. Neville wanted to cut Bellatrix limb from limb and when he was done, he wanted to cut her into small pieces. When Neville let his stream of spells go, Bellatrix was surprised at the ferocity in Neville's eyes and hesitated just long enough for one of the cutting hexes to hit her in her right leg. She responded by falling back to a defensive position waiting for her chance to retaliate but that never happened because Luna joined in with the cutting hex and the strike elves were seeking revenge for their fallen friends that died while spying at Voldemort's headquarters. In less than five minutes, Bellatrix was beyond recognition. When

Bellatrix died, Luna went over to Neville to comfort him just like Tonks did for Remus.

Hermione and Kayla were making their way to Malfoy. The two witches stood away from one another so Malfoy would have a difficult time taking them on. What Malfoy didn't take into account were the goblins that were coming up behind him. When he realized what was happening, Malfoy had no chance of survival as they showered him with a variety of spells from stunning, bludgeoning, cutting, explosion, torture, and killing curses. Every goblin had their own separate preference on what spell they wanted so it looked like a rainbow hitting Malfoy in the back and his sides. When Malfoy died, the two witches turned to watch Harry and Voldemort fight.

The Death Eaters were the first to go down and when all of the Death Eaters died, all eyes turned to Harry and Voldemort. Nobody wanted to interfere with the fight because many of them either consciously or subconsciously knew that this was going to be the final duel. Harry and Voldemort were staring at each other at first with their wands pointed at each other but once Pettigrew went down screaming it snapped the two of them back to reality. As if they were thinking the same thing, the two of them shot flames at each other but didn't hit their marks. This resulted in the two of them being surrounded by fire while they dueled. The fire started to grow but nobody made an attempt to put out the flames because they were still staring at the two dueling each other.

When Harry and Voldemort realized that continually using the flame spell was not going to work. Voldemort went back to his trusted killing curse and continually used it with disregard to defense. Harry knew that he would not be able to cast the killing curse so he used the explosion hex which was the most dangerous spell he could think of at the time. Harry also ignored defense and went all offensive. Neither of them was able to hit their marks but Harry was at an advantage because debris from the explosion hex was hitting Voldemort. Outside the ring of fire, people were dodging the stray killing curse spells being casted by Voldemort. In the end, everybody just moved from being behind Harry. Since neither of them was hitting their marks due to all the evasive dodging from Harry and Voldemort, it became an endurance duel. Both of them were incredibly hot from

the flames and were getting mild burns as the flames closed in on them.

Harry was in worse shape due to his injured left arm. That was when Harry switched his holly wand to his left hand which was slow to move and snapped his wrist so that his rose wand came out. The fighting was tiring on him and didn't know how much longer he would last but knew he couldn't let Voldemort leave this duel alive no matter what. Harry raised both wands in the area around Voldemort and summoned all of the alcohol from the school to hit the ground near Voldemort and around the inside circle of the flames. When the alcohol bottles started to break the flames started to feed off of it and Voldemort started to burn alive. He turned his wand on himself and tried to cool the burns and protect himself from the flames but it was too little too late. While Voldemort was getting rid of the flames around him, Harry made his way closer to Voldemort and unloaded with a barrage of explosion and cutting hexes at Voldemort's head. Voldemort died almost instantly after the first spell hit him but Harry's continued use of the spells made the head unrecognizable pieces of flesh and gray matter. After seeing the parts of Voldemort's brain scattered on the ground, Harry magically summoned all of Voldemort's body parts and placed in a pile in front of him. Harry fired off several fire spells to ensure that the corpse was burned and could not be recovered. By the time the last parts of Voldemort turned to ashes, Harry was being singed by the flames surrounding him and that's when Nightlight showed up and Harry knew what to do.

Nobody saw the end of the duel. All the spectators saw were alcohol containers flying towards the duel and when the alcohol bottles broke, the flames became too high for anybody to see anymore. That was when people started to put out the flames and when they were done, nothing was left except for burned ground, broken bottles, and ashes on the ground. Many of the people were stunned, some wanted to celebrate but some wanted to mourn Harry's death. Ginny was in tears being comforted by Kayla because her portkey to Harry wasn't working.

After a few more minutes, over the Forbidden Forest a few objects could be seen making their way over to the group gathered out on the field. It was four birds but on closer inspection, it was four phoenixes.

The four phoenixes were Nightlight, Sunrise, Sunset, and the last one was last seen in the Great Hall with Ginny. When the fourth phoenix landed, it landed on the ground in front of Ginny and transformed back into Harry. She jumped on him and he almost fainted immediately from all the pain that his body had just gone through.

Ginny kept on yelling, “Don’t you ever do that again! Are you hurt? Of course you are considering what you just did! Honestly...” she continued on and on until she noticed that Harry was barely standing.

Harry leaned into her for support and after he whispered to Ginny, “I’ll be fine. I need to rest,” he fainted.

A/N: I wanted to thank all of my reviewers once again and to let you all know that there is only one chapter left. Also to those who like to flame saying that I depart from canon. Just like most authors, and with every successive book that JKR has written, you will notice that it has always changed from what was held to be the canon for the characters. In this story, if canon was to get in my way, I will choose to follow my own path and I know that I am breaking from tradition but changes happen so to those that don’t like the departure from canon then there are plenty of other stories to read. Thank you again to those who give constructive criticisms and encouragement because you are the ones that keep this story going.

Chapter 40

Epilogue

Harry woke up the next evening to lots of noise and one notable voice. It was Madame Pomfrey trying to get the people near the Hospital Wing to be quiet so her patients could rest in peace. By the time Harry opened his eyes, he saw Ginny and Kayla talking to one another sitting to his right and Hermione, Neville, and Luna sitting to his left reading various books or in Luna's case an upside down issue of the Quibbler.

Harry sleepily said "How's everyone?"

Everybody around him dropped what they were doing and immediately pulled him into varying hugs with Ginny almost on top of him to Neville patting his shoulders. Harry was gasping for breathes and when everybody realized what was going on, they jumped off of him and muttered apologies. Harry asked how everyone was doing again.

Ginny was the first to answer him and yelled "What do you think you were doing last night? Don't ever scare us like that again!" She later softened up and gave him a kiss on his forehead in fear of hurting him more like when they just hugged him.

Harry took Ginny's hand while Kayla chimed happily "You did it Harry. You beat Voldemort and everything seems to be finally good again."

"How do you know that he's really gone?" Hermione voiced with some doubt.

Harry let the information of his duel and everything that has happened prior to the duel with Hermione, Luna, and Neville set into him. Voldemort's body was destroyed by Harry's explosion hexes during the duel but when he burned the body, which was to ensure that nobody tries to resurrect him again. He let out a wide smile that ran all the way to his eyes and the group started to fill each other in or more particularly Harry in on what has been going on.

Once Voldemort was defeated the recovery and healing had started almost immediately after Harry's duel. All classes were cancelled for the next three days to observe the three days of celebration set out across Britain for all the wizards and witches to mourn those that died in this and the last war, to honor the heroes and heroines who defended the light both living and dead, and to celebrate Voldemort's death, the Death Eater's demise and the new found freedom from fear.

As this was going on, Madame Pomfrey interrupted the group to take a look at her favorite patient under the careful watch of the two strike elves and two goblins standing at the corners of Harry's bed whose job was to protect Harry. The two happily talked to each other though Madame Pomfrey was not happy that the noise level started to rise again outside of the Hospital Wing. In the end, several privacy charms were used that was set there by Dumbledore and Pomfrey.

Dumbledore came to check on Harry and the two talked civilly to each other as Harry filled Dumbledore about the duel and how Voldemort got him to be separated from everybody else. The two of them knew that their relationship will never be anything like it was prior to Harry's fifth year and would have to live with it. Harry was relieved that he no longer was a weapon so Dumbledore was more than likely going to stay out of Harry's path much like most of the other students at Hogwarts.

Kayla's mom came to visit and take part in the celebration as she was given legal access to travel to and from Britain now without fear from the Ministry of Magic. By the end of the three days, Harry was awarded the Order of Merlin first class, and Ginny and Kayla were awarded the Order of Merlin second class for their parts in the final battle and what they did to help the light with emphasis on their performance as members of the Alliance.

The Weasleys came to apologize to Harry after the ceremony for the presentation of the Order of Merlin awards. Harry performed the same mind tricks that he did on Hermione, Luna, and Neville to check if they were truthful and found in their favor. He told them that he wasn't sure how things were going to turn out between their relationships to one another but he was going to make an effort for

Ginny. Ginny was grateful to Harry for his effort in getting back on better terms with her family but mostly happy because her family was starting to become what it was before the war started. The notable exception in all of this was Ron who stood by his family silently. Everyone present knew that Harry and Ron were probably going to have as little contact with each other as possible and probably not see each other during functions that included Ginny.

Fifteen Years Later

The Alliance of Magic became a public entity that included Wizarding nations across the world along with several magical groups. The building was opened up for public access and transformed from a military facility to a public facility with a public hospital system; many commercial stores were allowed to open up in the Sanctuary and were centered on a local division of Gringotts. The commercial section of the Sanctuary was where many of the bedrooms used to be. The Assembly room was expanded to accommodate the new members and a public viewing and listening area was added so people can watch the Alliance meetings while they were in progress.

Every group that was allowed into the Alliance had one vote on matters that came before the General Assembly. The General Assembly met for four months out of the year and voted on all issues while they were in session or on special high priority matters that a special meeting would be called for like aggression between Alliance members or threats by non-Alliance members. The Council of Members which consisted of one goblin, one house elf, one centaur, one Patriot, and as an honor to Harry, one member of the Potter family, were permanent members that had the power as a group to decide all matters when the General Assembly was not in session or veto policies that were passed. They were joined by a rotation of six other members elected to the Council for one year terms that represented the rest of the members of the Alliance in the Council of Members. Of the six representatives, they had one vote each, no veto power, and two must be a wizard or witch to represent the wizarding countries, and two must come from other magical groups like the Werewolves. A president was voted on by the General Assembly who

has no voting powers, elected to four year terms, presides over the General Assembly and Council of Members, and acts as the Head of State for the Alliance of Magic. Harry was continually elected as the President and when Harry and Ginny were married, a year after Ginny graduated from Hogwarts, she became the voting member of the Potter family in the Council of Members.

The Alliance had members from around the world and became a politically powerful entity that pushes causes like equality for magical beings and protection for orphans and children. The Alliance hasn't had to declare war on anybody but the threat was real if they had to.

Harry and Ginny had four children, two boys and two girls. The oldest child named James was going to enter his first year at Hogwarts. The next child is Lily, who is followed by Sirius, then Emily. The Potters were inseparable and much to Ginny's pleasure, Harry and the Weasleys became closer almost like a family except for Ron. Harry and Ron only met for family occasions but their relationship was improving. Ron married Hermione, Neville married Luna, and Remus married Tonks. All of the couples had kids about the same age as Harry's children and either had a child already in Hogwarts with was Remus and Tonks' case or will have one that will be going to Hogwarts next year with Lily.

Severus Snape was still the potions master at Hogwarts but Dumbledore stepped down and McGonagall became the Headmistress. Snape was not too happy because nobody would hire him if he quit due to his reputation with most of the Hogwarts Alumni. He was under tight scrutiny from McGonagall and the Deputy Headmistress now, which meant that he could no longer terrorize the non-Slytherin population. Kayla moved to England and shortly after she graduated, she became the Defense Against Dark Arts teacher and is currently the Deputy Headmistress of Hogwarts. Draco Malfoy and his friends who tried to become Death Eaters and start a revolt against Harry were all in Azkaban. Their revolt lasted only fifteen minutes because they chose the wrong time and place to attack Harry and ended up in the middle of a secret meeting where Harry was inspecting the strike elves and goblins for battle readiness. The Alliance kept a close watch on Azkaban to ensure that another breakout was not going to happen and have been successful so far.

Many magical communities with emphasis on house elves, goblins, and centaurs have received a great deal of equality. Magical creatures can be seen shopping in Hogsmeade or Diagon Alley next to wizards and witches. There have been minor acts of discrimination and prejudice but those who committed these acts were shunned by those who witness it happen or worse when word gets out, shop owners who were prejudice went out of business because most of their patrons would stop shopping there.

The Patriots became the military arm of the Alliance and its group was mixed with all magical creatures. They also guarded the Tomb of Magic with a changing of the guards every hour. Many magical beings continue to come to see the changing of the guards. All in all, under Harry's leadership the world was now at peace, equality was being achieved, and protection and help were given to the defenseless and needy.

The End

A/N: Thank you for all those who have read my story and reviewed. It really kept this story going. I'm sorry to all those that wanted a sequel but I can not do that at this time and probably will not start one considering I will be going on vacation for a month soon. I'm also sorry that this has been a short chapter but I can't write anymore. Thank you to all of my betas for all of their hard work especially Riven and IamSiriusgrl.

Challenge: Here is my personal challenge for those who want this story to continue. It is the 'STF Challenge' and the only guideline is that the story continues on where the last chapter left off and stays true to what happened in the Epilogue.